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superhero comics; The Dark Knight
is further proof of that."* —IGN

DAVID FINCH
JASON FABOK

B A T M A N™

THE DARK KNIGHT
GOLDEN DAWN

FINCH
• 2010 •



B A T M A N
THE DARK KNIGHT
GOLDEN DAWN



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THE DARK KNIGHT
GOLDEN DAWN

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BATMAN –THE DARK KNIGHT: GOLDEN DAWN

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BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT #1 cover
Art by DAVID FINCH



Dawn Golden.

I haven't thought about her in years. I'd put her out of my mind after she broke my heart in college.

Now she's become an **obsession**.

I find myself searching my memory for her... all the way down to the dimly remembered days before my life was **shattered forever**.

Before I became what I am.

DAWN IS OUR GUEST, BRUCE. TRY TO BE A GOOD HOST.

BUT SHE WON'T DO **ANYTHING!** SHE **HATES** ME!

GIVE HER A CHANCE TO GET TO **KNOW** YOU.

I'M SORRY, ALEISTER. YOU WERE **SAYING...**?

THOMAS, PLEASE...NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE.

Whoosh!!

I remember that I **hated** her when we first met. She was sullen and aloof.

It was as if she lived under a **dark cloud**.

BRUCE, WHY DON'T YOU AND DAWN RUN OUT AND GET SOME AIR. TRY TO HAVE SOME **FUN**.

I DON'T KNOW...

THEY'LL BE **FINE**, ALEISTER. THE GROUNDS ARE QUITE **SECURE**.

My parents went to Europe for two months that summer.

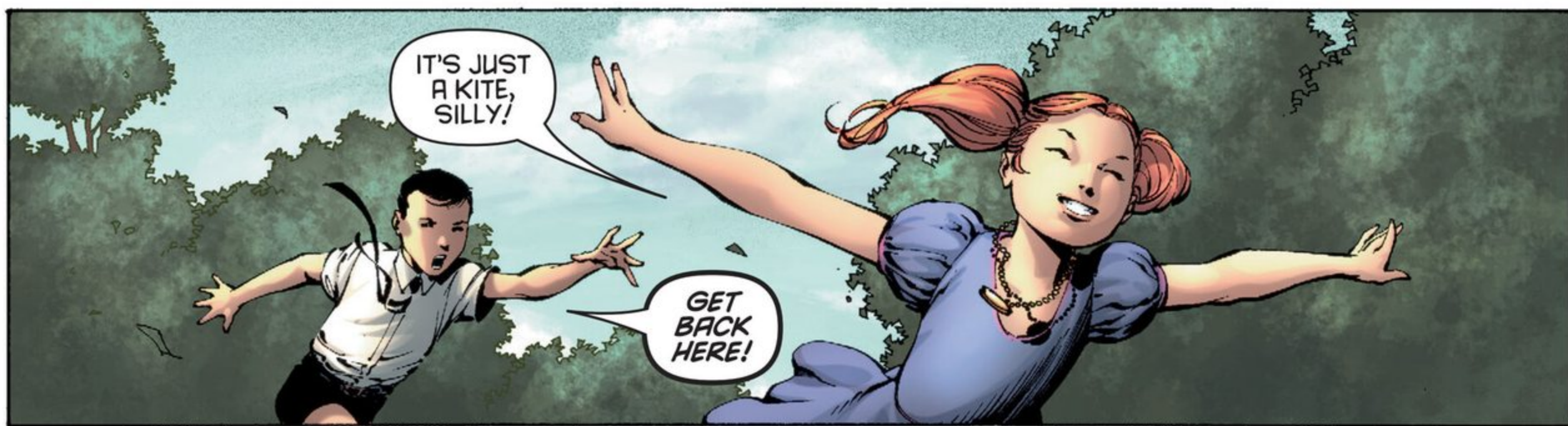
I didn't sleep for three days when they left, and I cried for a lot longer than that.

Alfred was a good babysitter though, and looking back, maybe that time made it easier the next year when I lost my parents forever.

When they came home they brought me a kite. It was beautiful, and huge, and I loved it.

When I flew it I knew my parents were thinking about me, even while they were gone.





It's cold and it's wet. The waiting is taking its toll.

I could go in and try to take him down now, but he's going to be dangerous enough outside where he'll be alone.

Innocent isn't the right word, but there are people... *uninvolved* inside.

SMASH

My patience pays off.

THANKS FOR GETTING THE DOOR FOR ME, ASS.

UGHNG

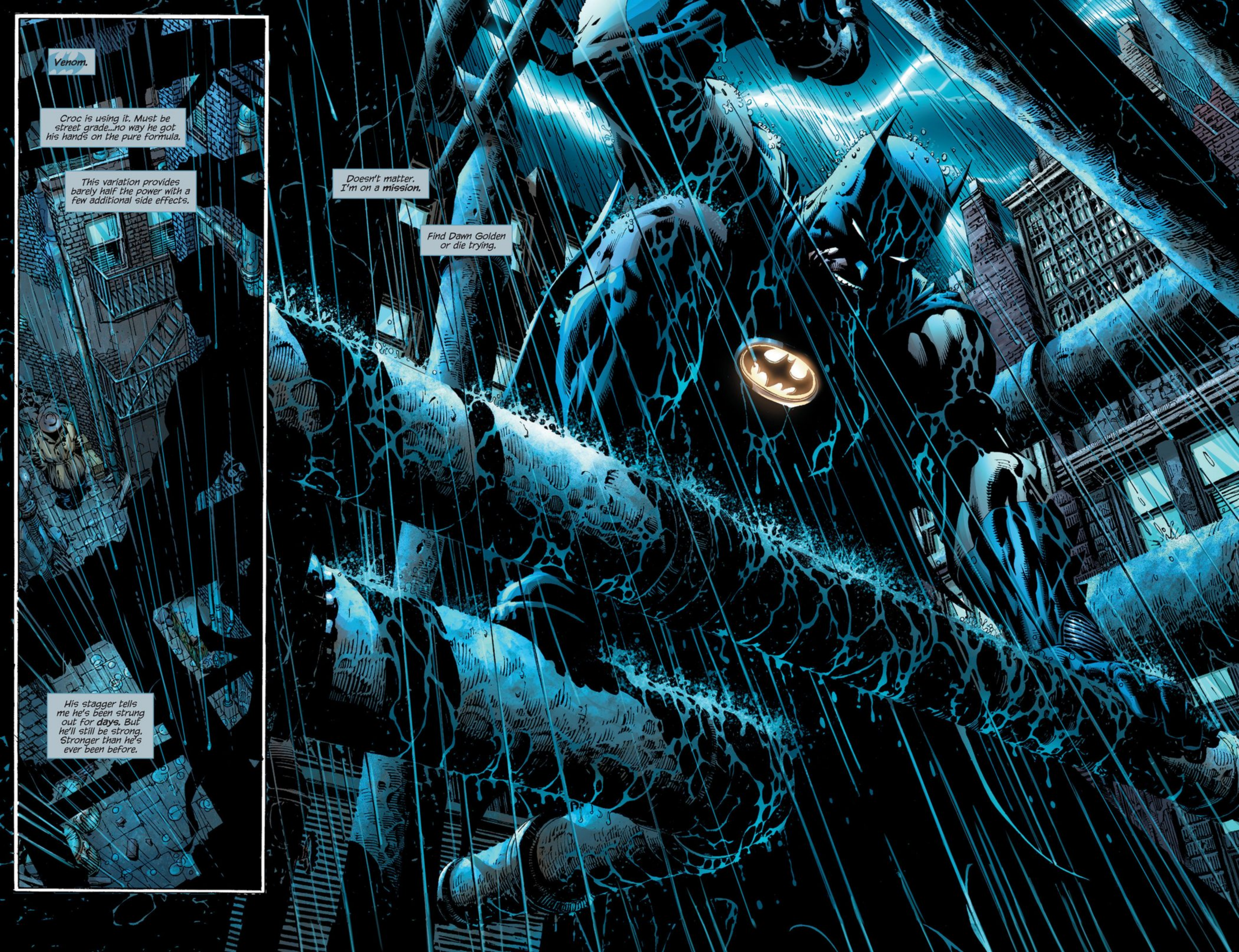
I feel a spike of adrenaline.

This won't be easy. Not that it ever is with *this* one.



HURRRGGH!





Venom.

Croc is using it. Must be street grade...no way he got his hands on the pure formula.

This variation provides barely half the power with a few additional side effects.

Doesn't matter. I'm on a mission.

Find Dawn Golden or die trying.

His stagger tells me he's been strung out for days. But he'll still be strong. Stronger than he's ever been before.



*I give him everything
I've got--if this doesn't
happen fast, it doesn't
happen at all.*

*He barely feels it, but it's
enough to knock him off
balance. A good start.*





Or
not.

FAP!

*Faster than I
thought he would be.
This is going to--*



CRASH!



RAAARRR!

*His adrenaline is still
spiking, he's not thinking
straight. Need to use that.*



SLAAMMMMM!



ARRRGH!

*Now is my
chance. Time
to fight dirty.*



YOU THINK THIS IS GOING TO DO ANYTHING MORE THAN **SLOW ME DOWN?**

CALM DOWN, CROC. I NEED YOU TO ANSWER MY--



NGG!

Barely saw him move. I need to get a sample of this drug. I don't know enough--could get me killed.



URK--!

Need something to get him off me fast.



Blacking out. No. Can't.

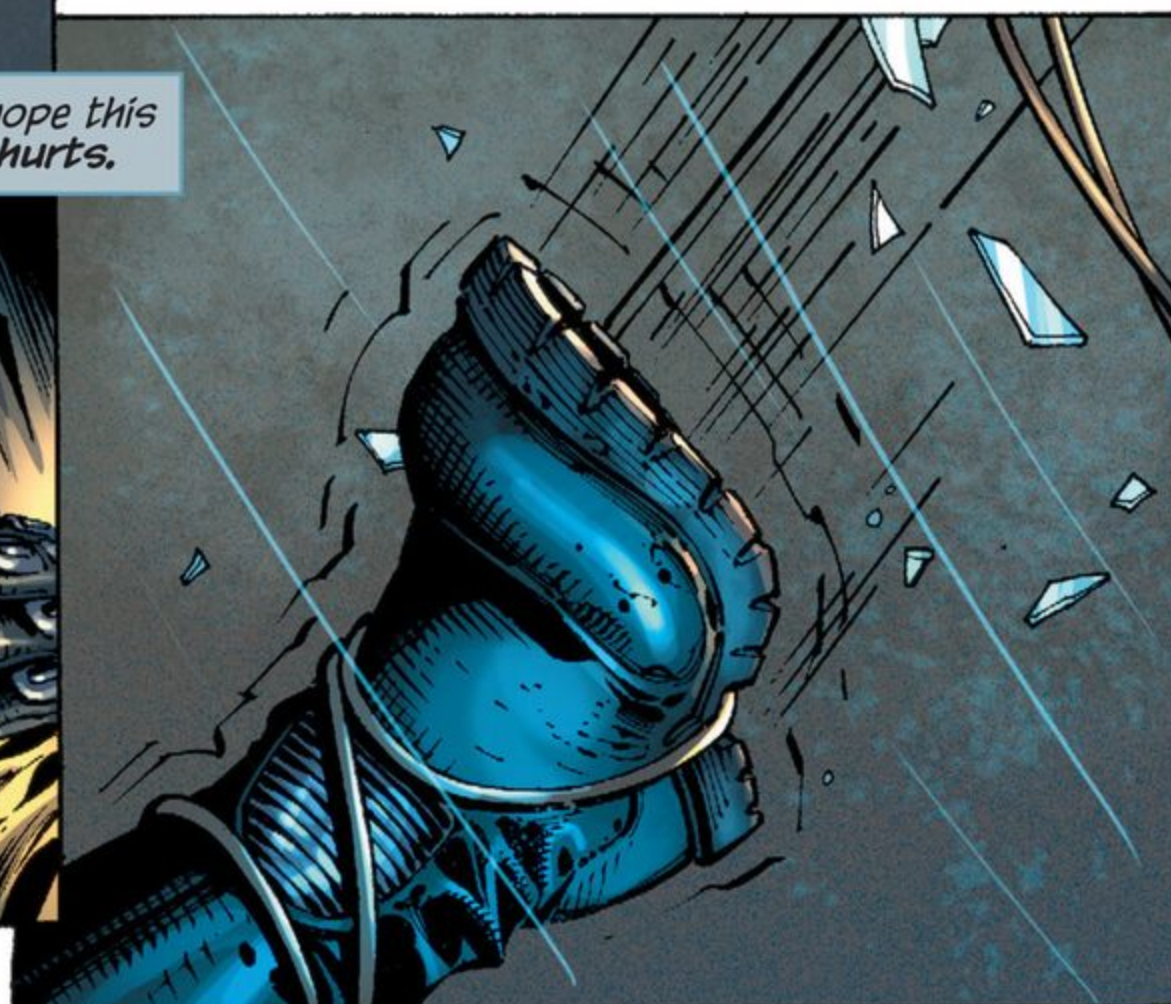
GOOD NIGHT, BAT PUNK!



Need to improvise.



I hope this hurts.



WHA--?



I'm lucky to be standing. This was a stupid risk. Venom is on the streets, needed to be prepared for someone like Killer Croc getting their hands on it.



I need to stop trying to prove to myself that I'm back in the game, or I'll really be out for good.



I WAS MINDIN' MY OWN BUSINESS. YOU ATTACKED ME.

YOU GOT **NOTHING** ON ME.



DAWN GOLDEN. RING ANY BELLS FOR YOU?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YER TALKIN' ABOUT.



WHAT'RE YOU...?

HEY! I GOT **RIGHTS!**



VENOM. THERE'S NO WAY *TRASH* LIKE YOU CAN AFFORD THE REAL DEAL. THIS STUFF IS MOSTLY POISON. BUT IT PACKS A PUNCH.

DAWN WENT MISSING LAST WEEK. YOU HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT THAT?

SERIOUSLY? YOU COME HERE ASKING FOR *CURRENT EVENTS*? DO I LOOK LIKE I *WATCH THE NEWS*?!



I BROUGHT SOMETHING FOR YOU, CROC.



IT IMMUNIZES THE BODY TO THE EFFECTS OF VENOM.

IT WORKS, BUT IT'S NOT PRETTY. YOU EVER GO OFF VENOM COLD TURKEY BEFORE? MOST PEOPLE DON'T *SURVIVE* IT.

DAWN. WHERE IS SHE? WHAT DID YOU *DO* WITH HER?



I...I DIDN'T KNOW WHO SHE WAS. I WAS OUT TAKING A WALK. JUST CLEARING MY HEAD. ALL OF A SUDDEN THIS GIRL IS IN FRONT OF ME.

WHERE WAS THIS?

FOURTH AND VICAR. DEVIL'S SQUARE.

I COULD TELL SHE WANTED IT. I JUST GAVE HER WHAT SHE WANTED!

AFTERWARDS SHE WAS PRETTY UPSET.

NO TELLING WITH CHICKS, RIGHT? A FRIEND OF MINE WANTED TO TAKE HER OUT AND SHOW HER A GOOD TIME. WHO AM I TO DENY A PAL? BESIDES, I DON'T THINK SHE LIKED ME FOR SOME REASON.

WHO DID YOU *SELL* HER TO? WHAT WAS HIS *NAME*?

SELL? WHOA... SLOW DOWN.

NAME!

L-LARS BECK.

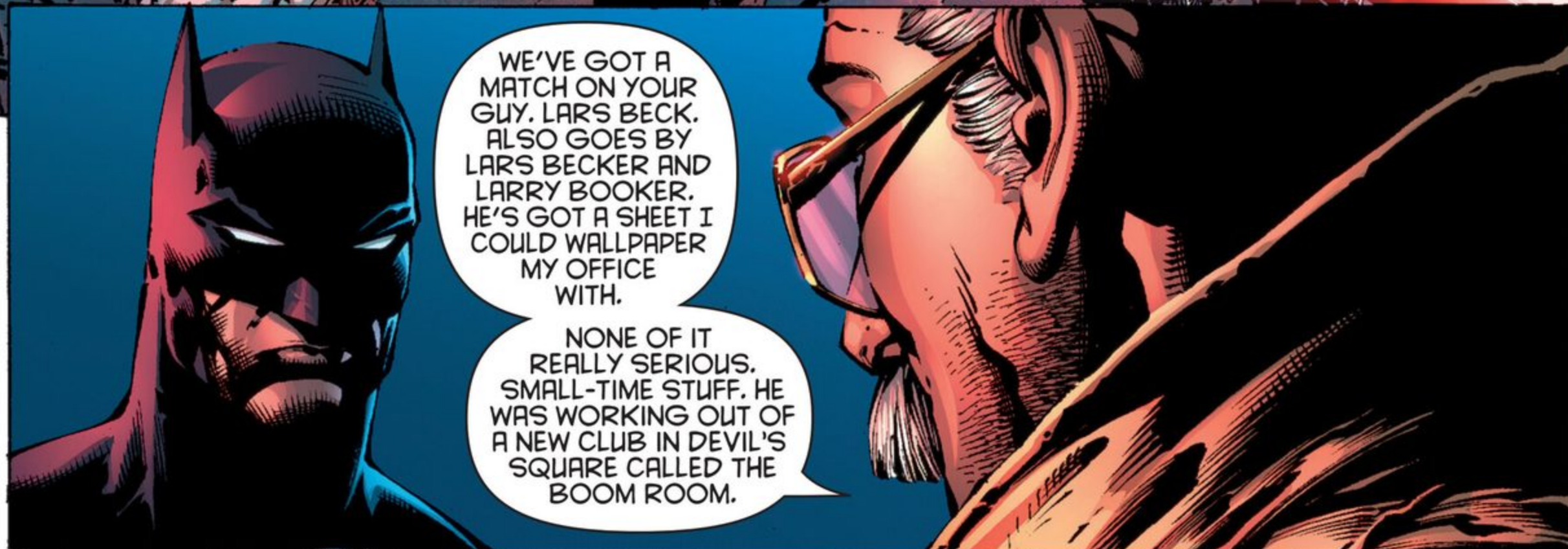


DIRTBAG.

HEY, STOP! GURG... GUK!



HWAAAH! PTHHHPPPT!



THE NARROWS...

MAYBE REN
OWED MONEY TO THE
VIC AND HE SKIPPED
TOWN.

NO WAY, MAN.
NO WAY. THE VIC
WON'T TAKE HIS
ACTION NO
MORE.

SOMEONE
ELSE, THEN. REN
ALWAYS BE INTO
SOMEONE.



WHAT ABOUT
JACKIE? ANYBODY
SEEN HIM AROUND?
OR MALLARD?
NOBODY SEEN HIM
FER WEEKS NOW.

FIRST MALLARD,
THEN JACKIE, AND
NOW REN. SOMETHIN'S
GOIN' DOWN. I
CAN *FEEL* IT.



YER ALL A
BUNCHA OLD WOMEN.
GOT NUTHIN' BETTER
TA DO THAN STIR
THE POT.

I'LL LEAVE
YOU LADIES TO
IT. GOTTA TAKE
A LEAK.

YEAH? WADDA
YOU KNOW, KING?
I GOT A *SENSE* FOR
THIS KINDA STUFF--
THIS AIN'T *RIGHT*.

SOMETHIN'S
OUT THERE, MAN.
SOMETHIN' *EVIL*.
THEM GUYS *AIN'T*
COMIN' BACK.

DUDE, IF YOU
HAD A SENSE FOR
STUFF YOU'DA KEPT
PEOPLE HERE 'STEAD
OF NOTICING WHEN
THEY'RE GONE.



WHATEVER.
WIPE THAT FREAKIN'
BOTTLE OFF BEFORE
YOU HAND IT BACK,
BOURBON. I DON'T
WANNA CATCH
WHATEVER YOU
G--

AAAAUUGGGHHGH!





THE BATCAVE.

I HAVE MATTERS THAT ARE *FAR* MORE PRESSING THAN A SYSTEMS ANALYSIS ON YOUR NEW TOY, YOU SHOULD KNOW. AND IT WOULD CERTAINLY HELP IF EACH PART WAS NOT CODED IN A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE.

YOUR NEW FLAIR FOR GLOBALIZATION CERTAINLY COMES WITH ITS SHARE OF ANNOYANCES.

JOKER



BECK

SPEAKING OF WHICH, YOU HAVE MORE PRESSING MATTERS AROUND THE WORLD VYING FOR YOUR ATTENTION AS WELL. JAPAN? ARGENTINA, PERHAPS?

AND YOUNG MASTER GRAYSON HAS PROVEN MORE THAN CAPABLE OF HANDLING GOTHAM CITY IN YOUR ABSENCE.

DO YOU REMEMBER DAWN GOLDEN, ALFRED?



MASTER BRUCE, I THINK THAT YOU FORGET THAT I AM *ALWAYS* HERE. MS. GOLDEN'S FACE HAS BEEN ON THAT SCREEN FOR DAYS NOW.

...NO. YEARS AGO. WHEN WE WERE SMALL CHILDREN.

I REMEMBER THAT SHE WAS A SULLEN CHILD. HER FATHER, ALEISTER... I NEVER CARED FOR HIM. SHE WAS A PRODUCT OF SUSPECT UPBRINGING.

YES.



SHE COULD NOT BE SAVED FROM HER FATHER THEN, AND SAVING HER NOW CANNOT CHANGE THAT, MASTER BRUCE. YOU DO UNDERSTAND THAT, I HOPE.

YOUR OBSESSION WITH THIS CASE IS BECOMING SLIGHTLY UNHEALTHY...



LARS BECK. IF HE IS CONNECTED, I'M NOT SEEING IT HERE. EVERYTHING I CAN FIND JUST POINTS TO A SMALL-TIME CLUB OWNER WHO DEALT A LITTLE ON THE SIDE.

I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THAT THERE'S A LOT MORE GOING ON HERE THAN MEETS THE EYE. I'M GOING UNDERCOVER TO ASK SOME QUESTIONS, BUT FIRST I WANT TO GET A GOOD LOOK AT THE PLACE WHILE IT'S CLOSED.

MAYBE SOMETHING WILL TURN UP.



ACCESS THE LOCAL GRID AND CUT THE POWER FOR A TWO-BLOCK RADIUS AROUND THE CLUB.

HAVE THE BATMOBILE READY TO GO IN TEN MINUTES.



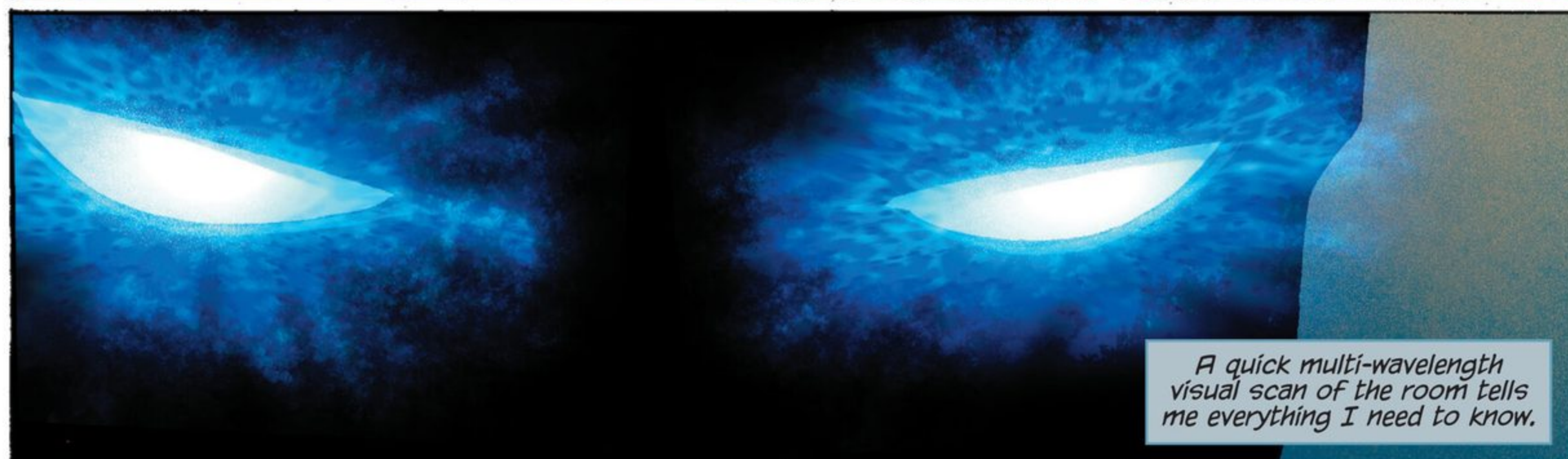
YES, MASTER BRUCE.

I'M SO GLAD THAT WE HAD THIS CHANCE TO TALK...



The Boom Room. A seedy little meat market in the poor end of town. It's empty, but I don't expect to find Dawn waiting for me when I come in the back door.

Hopefully I can find something that brings me closer to finding her.



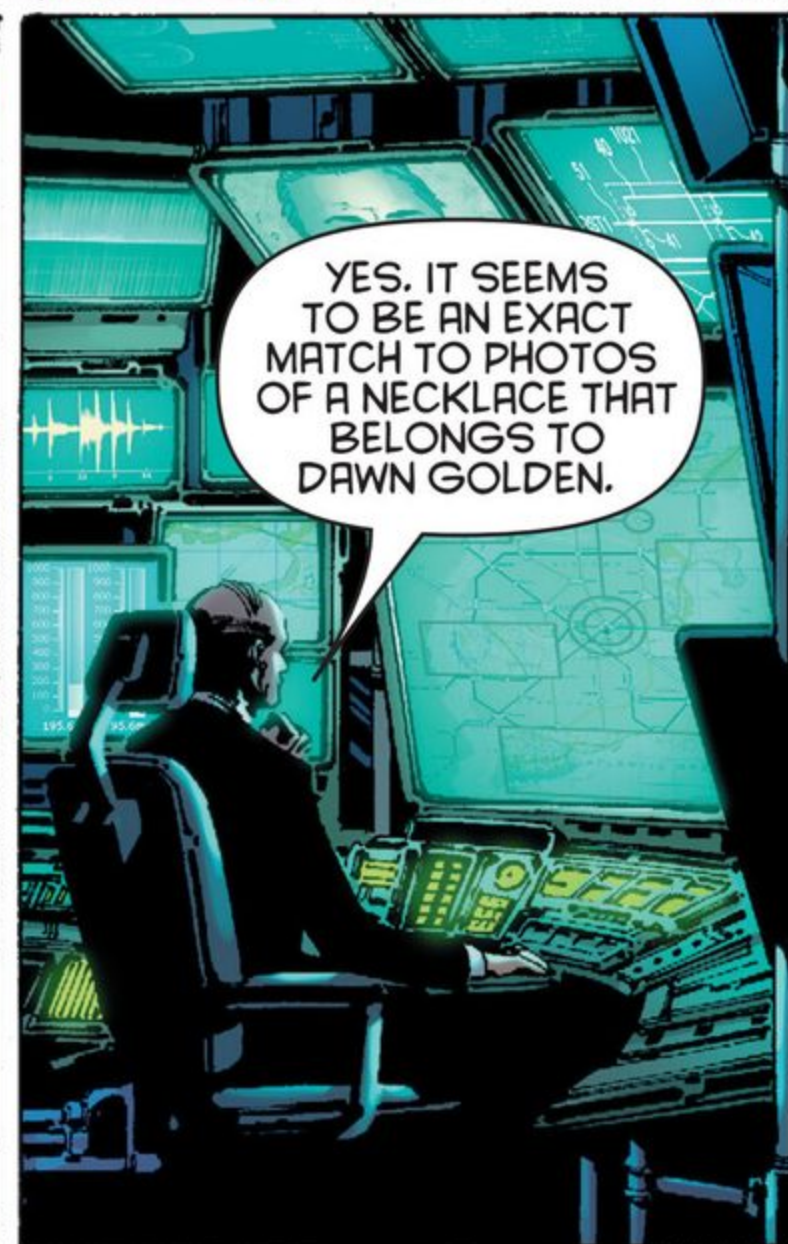
A quick multi-wavelength visual scan of the room tells me everything I need to know.



No need to kick over furniture.



ALFRED,
ARE YOU
SEEING
THIS?



YES. IT SEEMS
TO BE AN EXACT
MATCH TO PHOTOS
OF A NECKLACE THAT
BELONGS TO
DAWN GOLDEN.



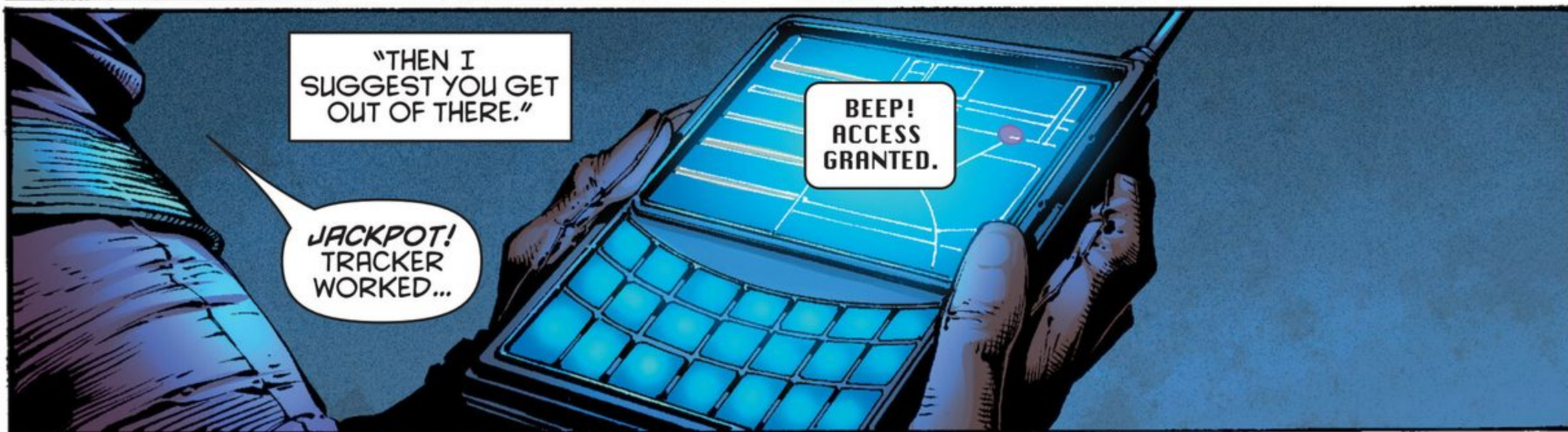
I remember, as far back as our time together as children, her wearing this necklace. It's been wiped of any prints.

"I'LL HAVE TO GET IT BACK TO THE CAVE FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS, ALFRED."



"BUT SIR, WHY WOULD SOMEONE WIPE IT OF PRINTS BEFORE PUTTING IT IN THEIR OWN SAFE?"

"BECAUSE IT'S A TRAP."



"THEN I SUGGEST YOU GET OUT OF THERE."

BEEP!
ACCESS
GRANTED.

JACKPOT!
TRACKER
WORKED...



C'MON...
C'MON...

...SUCCESS!

SECURITY
SYSTEMS
DISABLED.



SIR, I'VE
LOST THE CAR!
IT'S BEEN TAKEN
OFFLINE!



THAT'S
IMPOSSIBLE!
NO ONE
COULD--

OH, EXCUSE
ME. AM I
INTERRUPTING
SOMETHING?

I'M SOMETHING
OF A NIGHT OWL LATELY,
I SIMPLY CANNOT SLEEP.
TOO MANY THINGS THAT
REQUIRE MY
EAGLE EYE.

AND WHO
SHOULD I FIND
STEALING EGGS
FROM MY
NEST?

BATMAN.

THESE MEN
CARRY THE MOST
ADVANCED MILITARY
HARDWARE IN THE
WORLD. YOU SIMPLY
NEVER KNOW WHAT
SORT OF RODENT
MAY TURN UP.

THEY
CANNOT
MISS.

PENGUIN...

IN OTHER
WORDS, YOUR
GOOSE IS
COOKED.



BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT #2 cover
Art by DAVID FINCH, SCOTT WILLIAMS and PETER STEIGERWALD



FINCH
WILLIAMS
STEIGERWALD







ARG!

UHN!

ERK!

NO! NO!
NO!

NO MORE
GUNS. NOW
I ASK THE
QUESTIONS.



HWAAAAAK!



≧HUFF
HUFF≦



ARRRGHH!

ZARRRK



HELL OF A MESS, SIR. IT'S A WONDER NOBODY GOT KILLED.

YES IT IS. DOWNRIGHT MIRACULOUS.

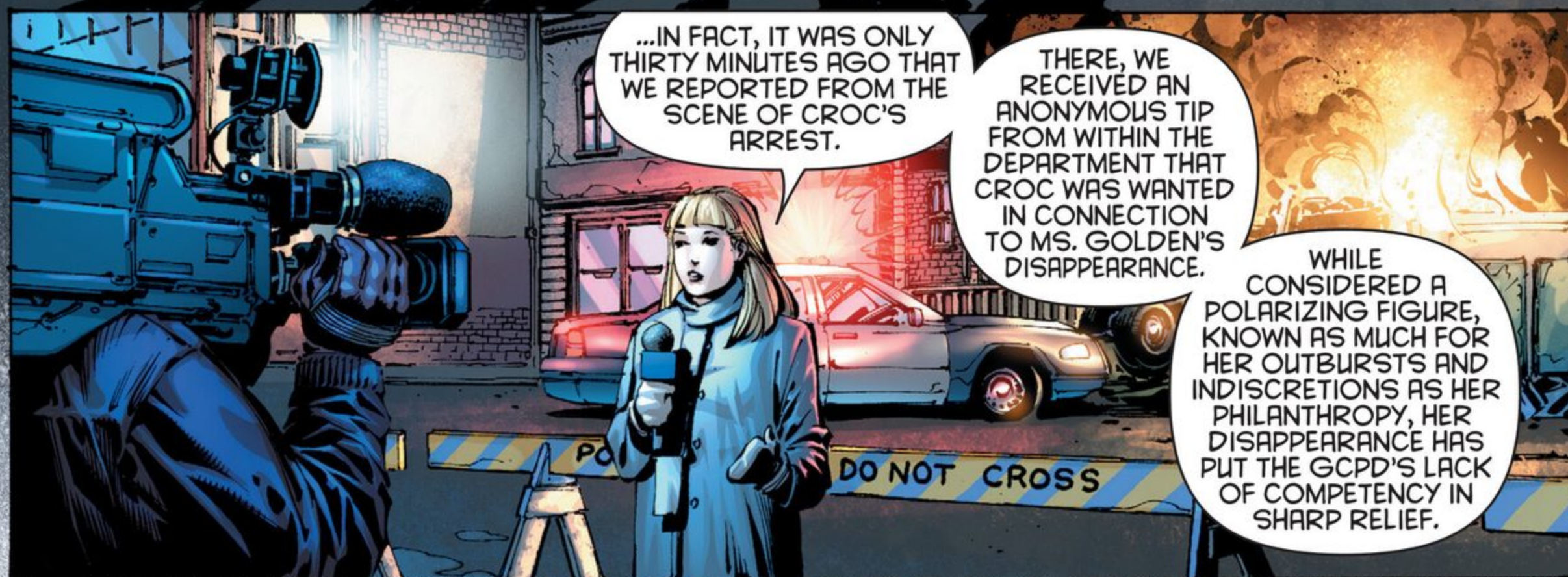
THREE OFFICERS ARE EN ROUTE TO THE HOSPITAL. AS OF NOW, THEIR CONDITION IS UNKNOWN.

EYEWITNESSES DESCRIBE AN ENRAGED **KILLER CROC** TEARING HIS WAY FREE FROM THE WRECKAGE OF THIS PRISONER TRANSPORT TRUCK.

HIS CURRENT WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN. OBVIOUSLY HE'S CONSIDERED ARMED AND **VERY DANGEROUS**.

NO WORD ON THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT THAT ALLOWED CROC TO ESCAPE, AND THE POLICE HAVE SO FAR REFUSED TO COMMENT.

WITH THE DEPARTMENT ALREADY UNDER SO MUCH PRESSURE TO FIND SOCIALITE DAWN GOLDEN, THIS LATEST SETBACK COULD NOT HAVE COME AT A WORSE TIME...



...IN FACT, IT WAS ONLY THIRTY MINUTES AGO THAT WE REPORTED FROM THE SCENE OF CROC'S ARREST.

THERE, WE RECEIVED AN ANONYMOUS TIP FROM WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT THAT CROC WAS WANTED IN CONNECTION TO MS. GOLDEN'S DISAPPEARANCE.

WHILE CONSIDERED A POLARIZING FIGURE, KNOWN AS MUCH FOR HER OUTBURSTS AND INDISCRETIONS AS HER PHILANTHROPY, HER DISAPPEARANCE HAS PUT THE GCPD'S LACK OF COMPETENCY IN SHARP RELIEF.



HARVEY. TALK TO ME.

NO WORD ON CROC YET, BOSS. BUT WE'LL TRACK HIM DOWN.

BUT LISTEN, THAT'S NOT WHY I CALLED. MAYOR HADY'S CAMPED OUT IN YOUR OFFICE. HE'S GOT INTERNAL AFFAIRS WITH HIM, AND THEY'RE COMBING YOUR FILES.



WHAT'S HE LOOKING FOR?

PROBABLY NOTHING. I THINK HE'S JUST LAYING THE GROUNDWORK TO PIN THIS ON YOU IF THE GIRL TURNS UP DEAD.

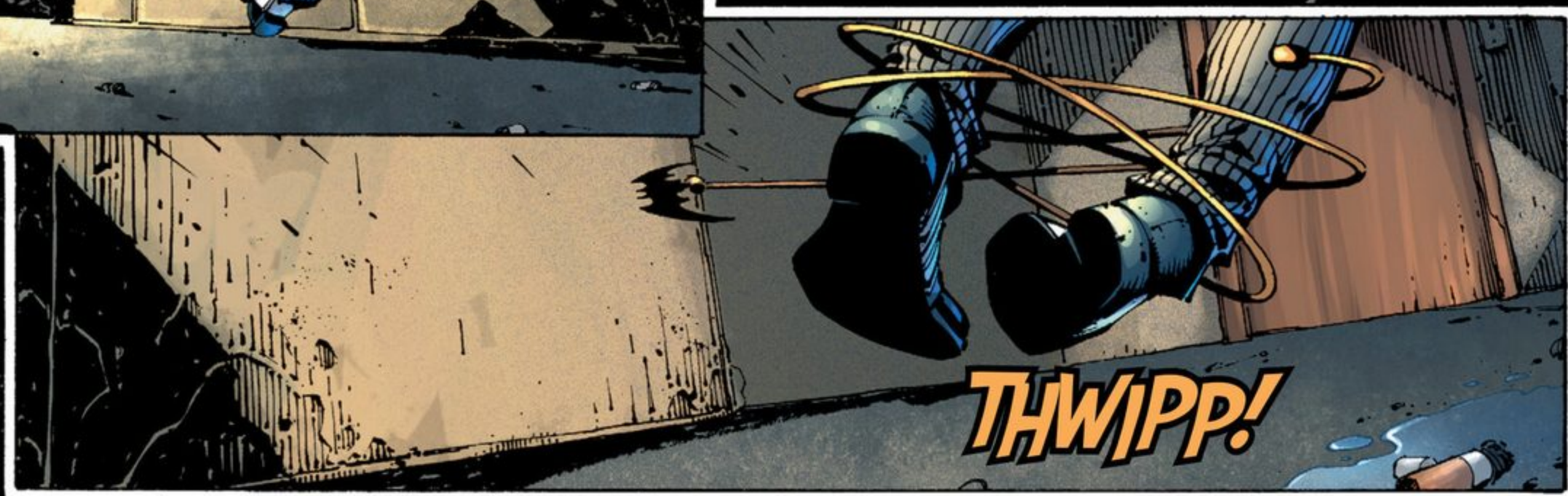
THAT ALL?

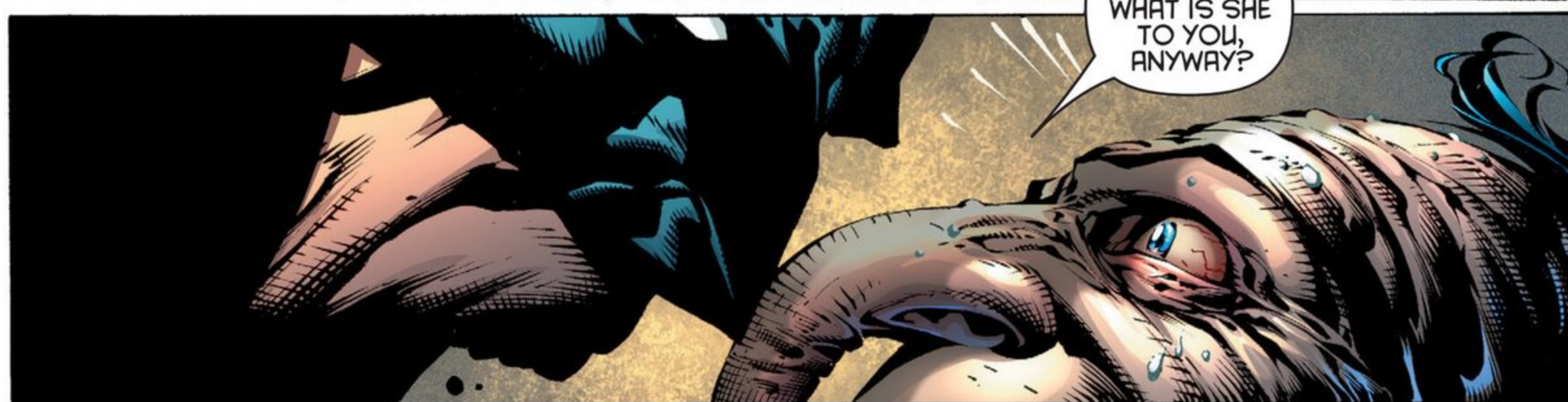


ONE OTHER THING. THE NEW GUY, WHAT'S HIS NAME--FORBES. THE MAYOR JUST PUT HIM IN CHARGE OF THE DAWN GOLDEN INVESTIGATION.

WHAT?!





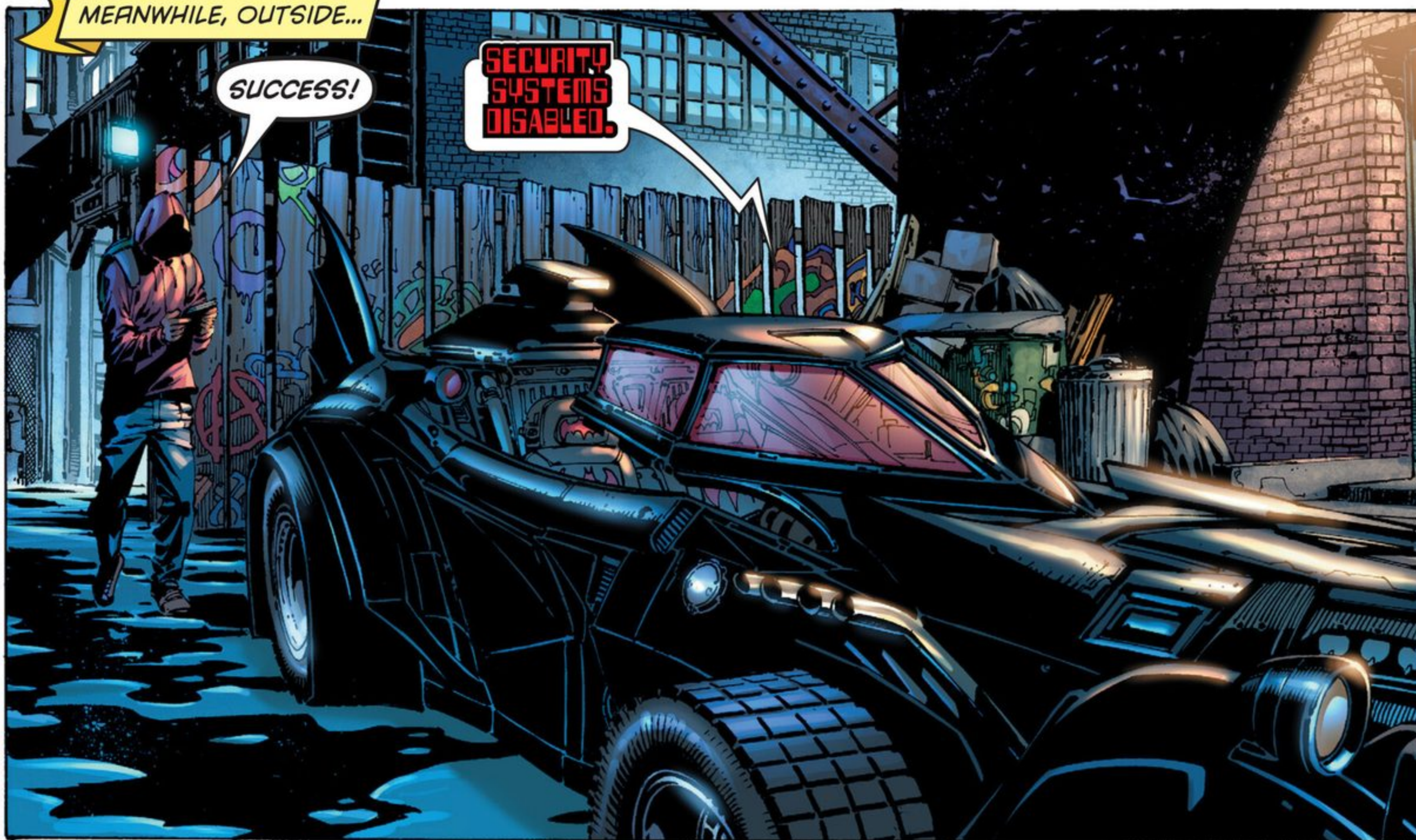




MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE...

SUCCESS!

SECURITY
SYSTEMS
DISABLED.



CAN'T
BELIEVE IT
ACTUALLY
WORKED!



SO THIS
IS THE FAMOUS
BATMOBILE.



OW!
BE CAREFUL,
YOU SCALY
BRUTE!

YOU WEIGH
A LOT FOR
SUCH A LITTLE
GUY.



WATCH YOUR
MOUTH, INGRATE!
I'LL HAVE YOU
KNOW, I EAT LIKE
A *BIRD*!

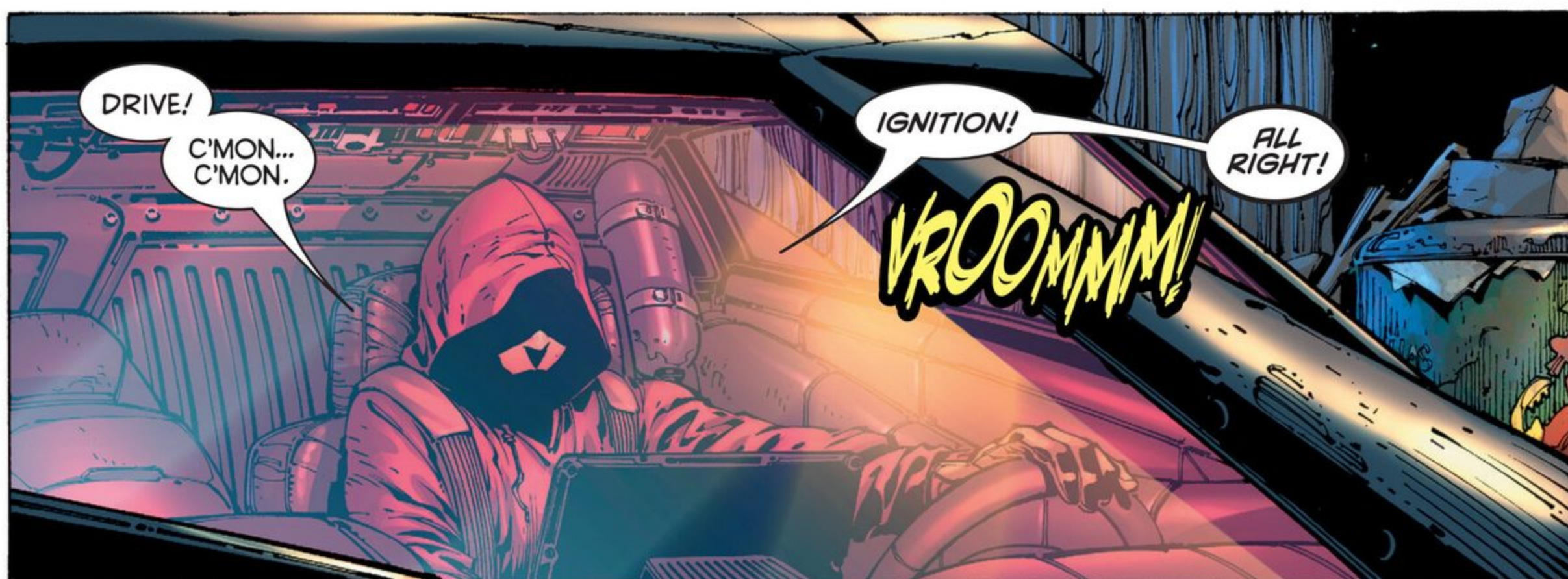
I SHOULD
HAVE YOU STRUNG
UP BY YOUR TOES
FOR LEAVING ME TO
THAT SAVAGE!



CLOSE
CANOPY!

SHOOK





THE NARROWS.

I CAN'T GET KING OUTTA MY HEAD...HOW HE DIED...

...WHAT COULDA DONE THAT TO HIM?

WHATEVER IT WAS, IT'S TAKING US OUT ONE BY ONE.

I'M NOT HANGING AROUND TO FIND OUT WHO'S NEXT.

YEAH? WHERE YOU GONNA GO? THIS PLACE IS ALL WE KNOW.

I GOT IDEAS. ANYWAY, IT'S GOTTA BE BETTER THAN HERE.

YOU CAN'T JUST CUT OUT ON US, MANNY. WE'VE ALWAYS STUCK TOGETHER.

WE JUST GOTTA KEEP EACH OTHER CLOSE. NOBODY EVER GOT HIT WHEN THEY WASN'T ALONE.

NO. I CAN FEEL THAT THING OUT THERE. IT'S *WATCHIN'* US, ALL THE TIME.

IF WE STAY HERE, WE'LL WIND UP JUST LIKE KING BEFORE WE KNOW WHAT HIT US.

WE'RE THE ONLY FAMILY YOU GOT. *DON'T* FORGET THAT.

YOU LET SOME MONSTER CHASE YOU AWAY, YOU'LL BE LEFT WITH NOTHIN'. YOU'RE BETTER OFF DYIN' HERE.



HE'S RIGHT, MANNY. WE GOT NUTHIN' BUT EACH OTHER. THERE'S NOWHERE FOR US TO GO.



I-I GOT FAMILY OUT THERE...BUT THEY STOPPED CALLING ME THAT A LONG TIME AGO.



ANYWAY, WHAT MONSTER WANTS TO BE OUT IN *THIS*?



KRAKOW
YNN!



HABA. THAT'S THE SPIRIT, BUDDY. I'M SURE WE'RE FINE TONIGHT.

THE RESIDENCE OF
JASON BLOOD.

TOO MANY
SIGNS TO
IGNORE.

≡SIGH≡

I CAN'T SIT
THIS ONE OUT.
LIKE IT OR NOT,
NEITHER OF
US CAN.

CHANGE!
CHANGE, O
FORM OF
MAN.

RELEASE
THE MIGHT
FROM FLESHY
MIRE.

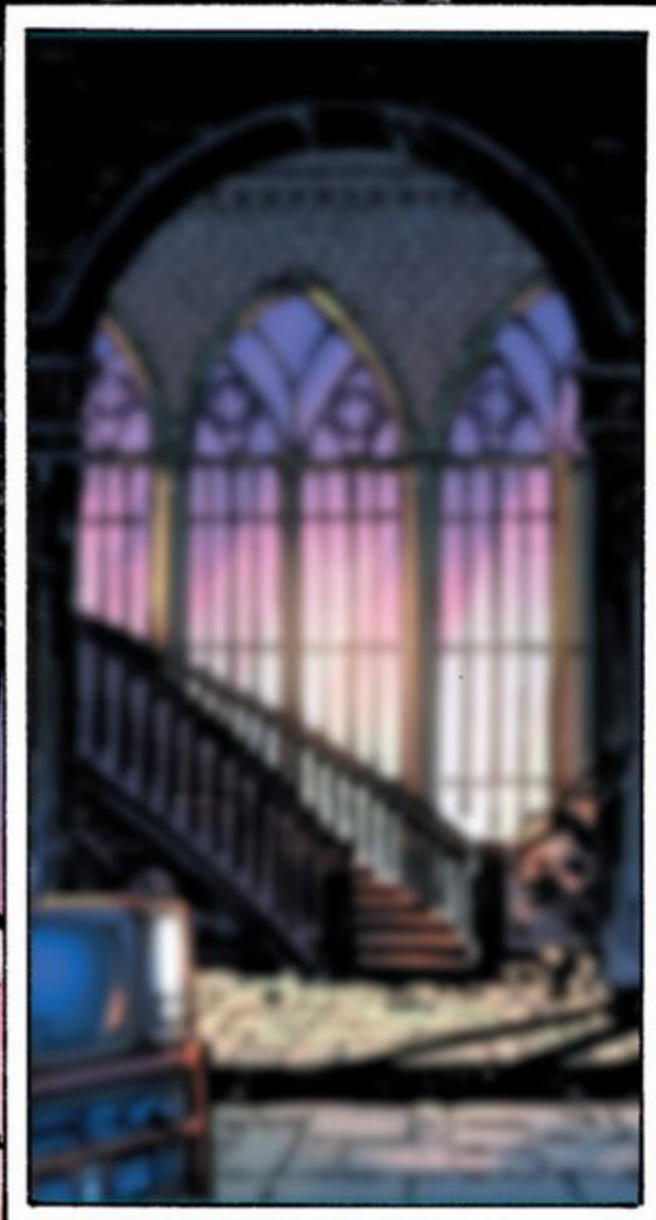
BOIL THE
BLOOD IN
HEART OF
FIRE!

GONE!
GONE, THE
FORM OF
MAN...

RISE, THE
DEMON...



ETRIGAN!

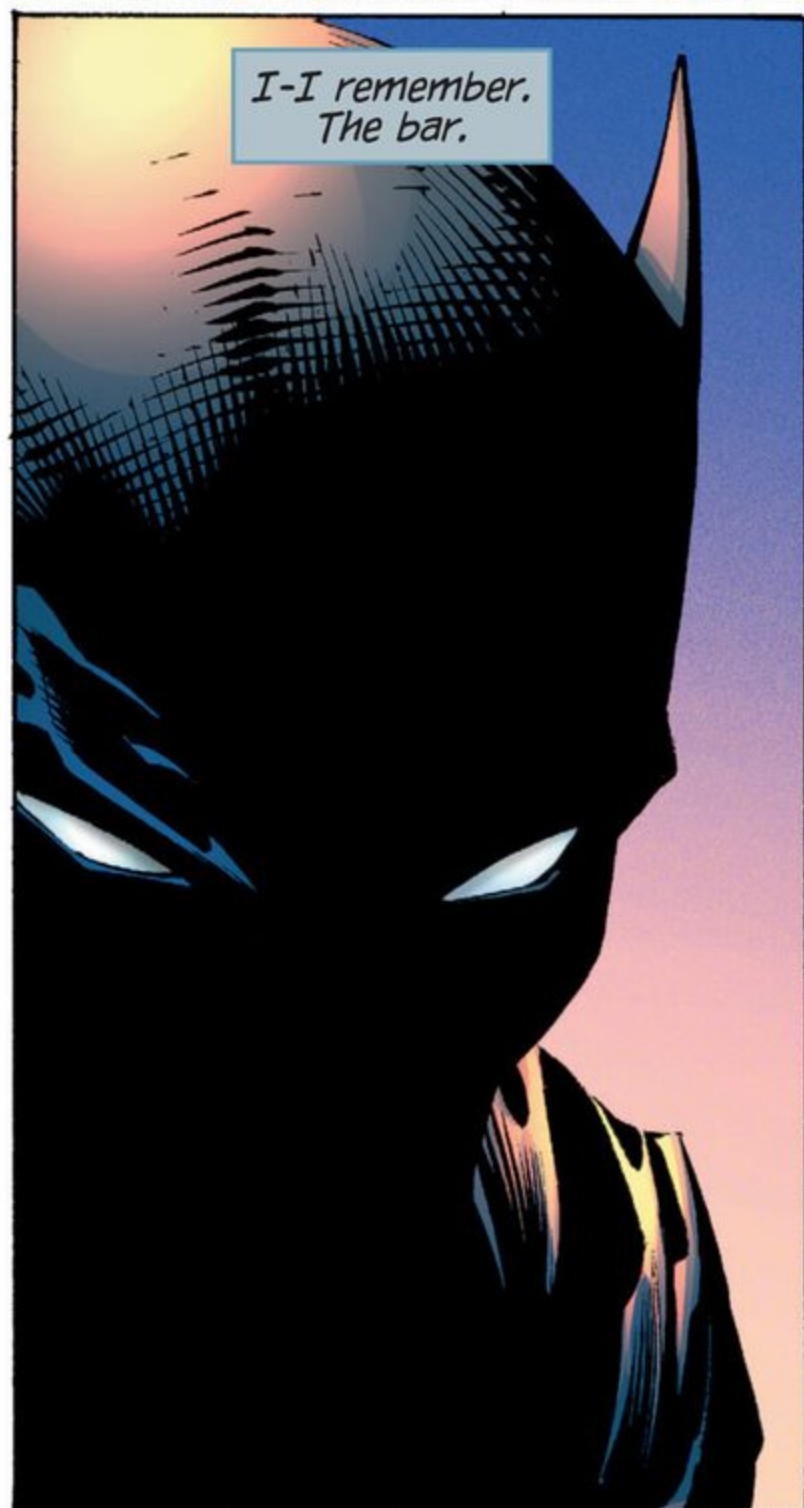




UGN...

Rusty blades are twisting in my head.
Hard to focus through the pain.

Where
am I?



I-I remember.
The bar.



Finding
Dawn's
necklace.
Holding
it in my
hand.

Then rage. Too
strong to fight...
I didn't want to
fight.

What have
I done?!



The amulet!
Where is it?

It's gone. I can
feel it. And the rage
is gone with it.



Have to
get ou--

LOOK WHO'S
AWAKE.



JUST
IN TIME FOR
THE **MORNING**
SHOW.

YOU'LL HAVE
TO EXCUSE THE
IMPERSONAL NATURE
OF THIS EXCHANGE,
BATMAN.

I'M SLIGHTLY
INCAPACITATED AT
THE MOMENT. AND
SINCE I HAVE YOU
TO THANK FOR MY
CURRENT STATE, I'VE
TAKEN THE LIBERTY
OF ARRANGING A
SMALL TOKEN OF MY
APPRECIATION.



WATCH!

LET ME
SWITCH TO A
MORE INTERESTING
SCENE THAN MY
SMILING FACE.

DAWN
GOLDEN.
I THINK
THE LIGHTING
CAPTURES
HER WELL.

NO!



BUT I'M NOT
SURE HOW LONG
SHE CAN SURVIVE
THE HEAT.

YOU
MANIAC!



OH, I THINK
WE BOTH KNOW
WHO THE **REAL**
MANIAC IS
NOW.

ENJOY
THE SHOW!



TRY NOT TO
GET TOO EXCITED.
THOSE **BOMBS** ARE
SET TO YOUR
HEART RATE!

WAHA
HAHAH!



GOTHAM CITY...
THE NARROWS.

>HUFF<
>HUFF<
>WHEEZE<



N-NO!



>HUFF<
>HUFF<



ROAARRR!

AAAAHHHHH!



FINCH
WILLIAMS
SINCLAIR

BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT #3 cover
Art by **DAVID FINCH**, **SCOTT WILLIAMS** and **ALEX SINCLAIR**



RRRRGGGGHHH!!

AAAAHHHHHHHHH!!



W-WHAT
ARE YOU?!
GET OFF
ME!



N-NO,
PLEASE!



YOUR FUN
HAS COME TO
AN END, LITTLE
DEMON...



SPLAT!

RARRGGGH!



THE BALANCE
MUST
BE
MAINTAINED!

SSLAASSSSSSSHH!!

I KNOW WHO
YOU ARE... WHERE
IS YOUR RHYME,
DEMON?

YOUR
POWER IS
GONE. YOU
CANNOT
STOP ME!

HAHA! THEN
IT IS *TRUE*. YOU
HAVE LOST YOUR
STATUS!

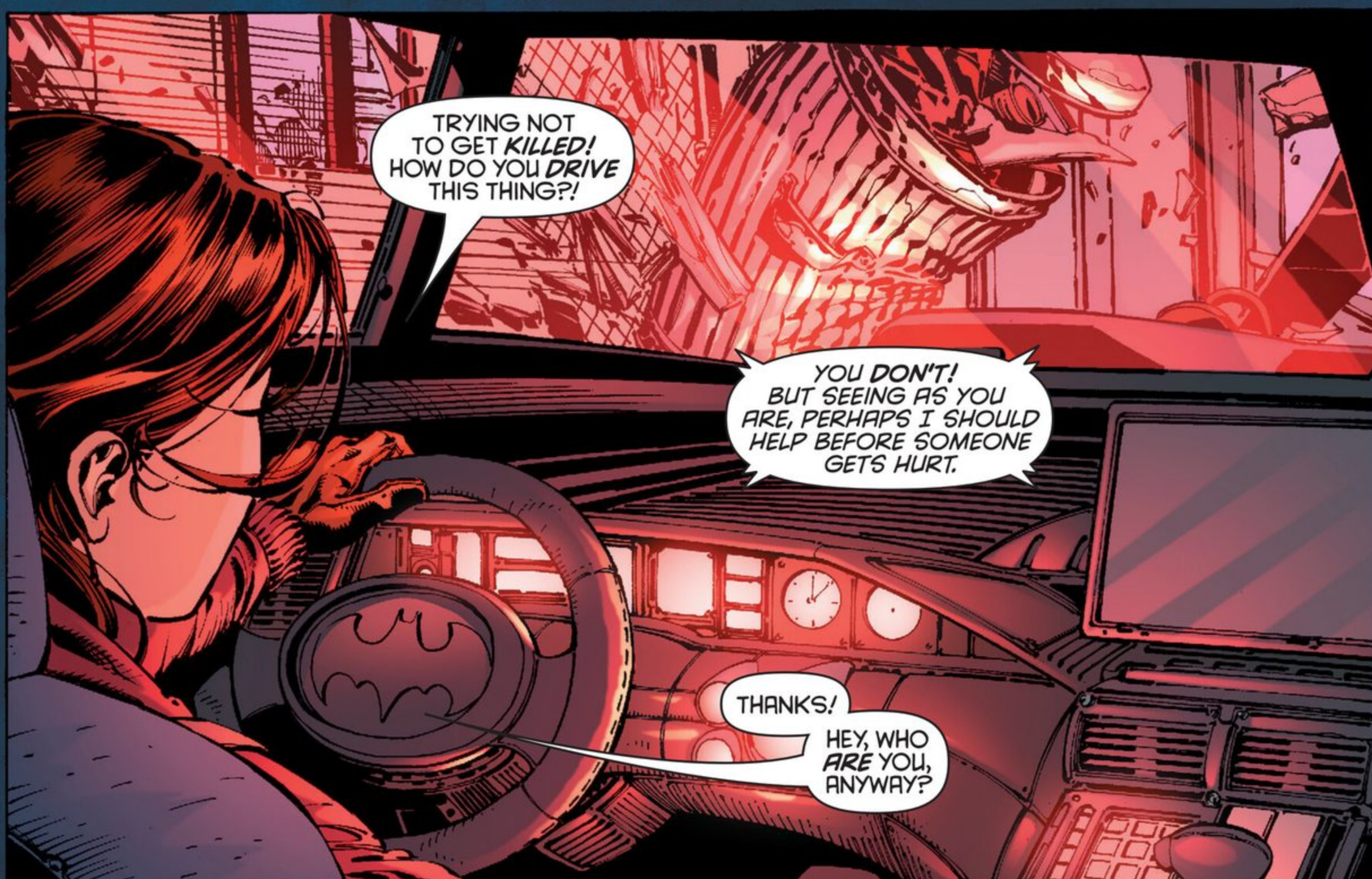
RRAARRGGHH!

YOU SHOULD
NOT HAVE COME.
THERE WILL BE A
PRICE!

TH-THANKS!

I
THOUGHT
I WAS A
GONER FOR
SURE!

I DID NOT
COME TO *SAVE*
YOU, HUMAN.





I'M YOUR
FRIEND. YOU
KNOW THAT,
RIGHT?

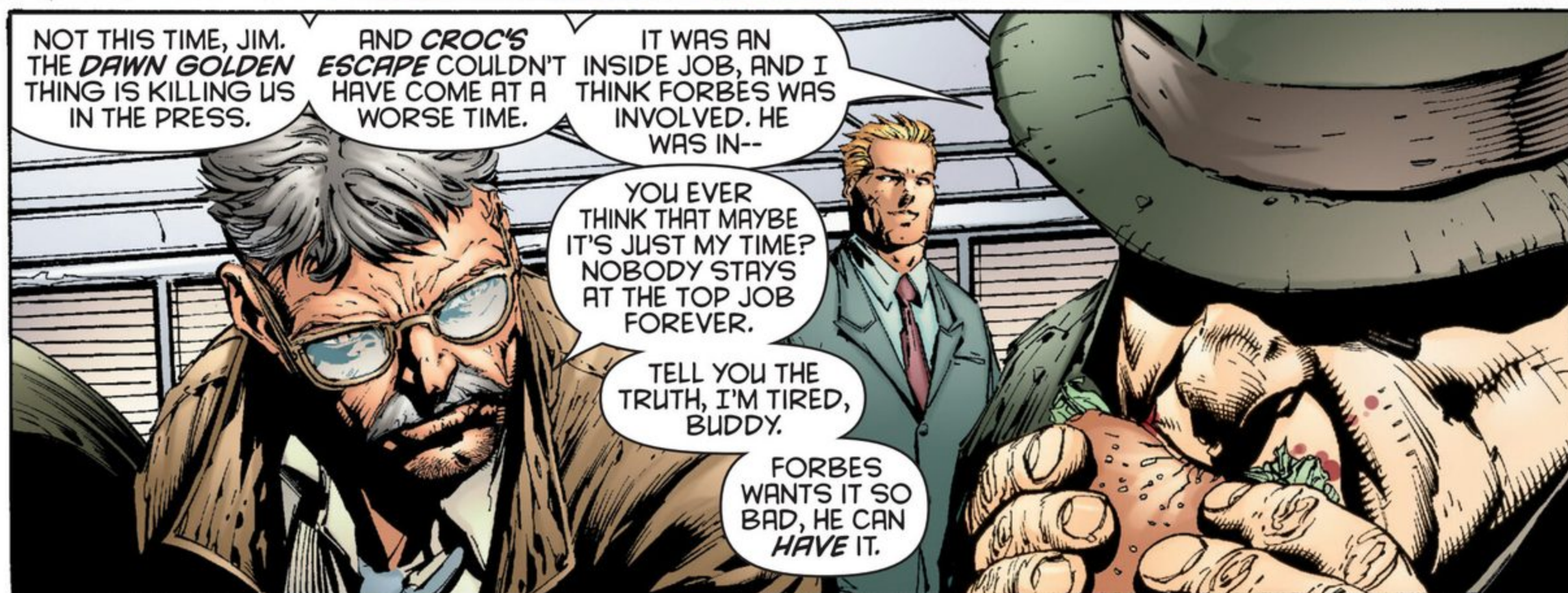
I KNOW THAT,
HARVEY. I DO. BUT
I'VE GOT IT UNDER
CONTROL.

FORBES ISN'T
JUST GUNNING FOR
YOUR JOB, BOSS. IT'S
BIGGER THAN
THAT.



FORBES IS JUST TOO AMBITIOUS
FOR HIS OWN GOOD. IT'S GONNA
GET HIM IN TROUBLE SOON
ENOUGH.

YOU'VE BEEN
AROUND THE BLOCK,
BULLOCK, SO YOU
SHOULD KNOW HOW
THIS GAME
PLAYS OUT.



NOT THIS TIME, JIM.
THE **DAWN GOLDEN**
THING IS KILLING US
IN THE PRESS.

AND **CROC'S**
ESCAPE COULDN'T
HAVE COME AT A
WORSE TIME.

IT WAS AN
INSIDE JOB, AND I
THINK FORBES WAS
INVOLVED. HE
WAS IN--

YOU EVER
THINK THAT MAYBE
IT'S JUST MY TIME?
NOBODY STAYS
AT THE TOP JOB
FOREVER.

TELL YOU THE
TRUTH, I'M TIRED,
BUDDY.

FORBES
WANTS IT SO
BAD, HE CAN
HAVE IT.



AW, I
APPRECIATE THE
SENTIMENT.

BUT I'M JUST
HERE TO DO WHAT
I CAN FOR THE GOOD
PEOPLE OF THIS
FINE CITY.

HEY, I'M NOT
INTERRUPTING,
AM I?





MEANWHILE...

WATCH THE TV!

YOU GOT ME, PENGUIN...

...JUST LET DAWN GO.

SHE'S OF NO VALUE TO YOU NOW.



NOT TRUE! AFTER ALL, WHO CAN PUT A PRICE ON REVENGE?

THAT WRETCHED GIRL DESERVES EVERYTHING THAT'S COMING TO HER AND MORE.

LET ME TELL YOU A FUNNY STORY...

OF COURSE, I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO WASN'T LAUGHING.



WE MET AT THE GOTHAM SOCIAL CLUB. SHE WAS SO VERY CHARMING AND BEAUTIFUL. I WAS IMMEDIATELY SMITTEN.

I LAVISHED HER WITH GIFTS AND OFFERED TO ESCORT HER TO THE WINTER BALL. IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL EVENT AT THE ICEBERG. YOU SHOULD REALLY TRY TO MAKE IT SOME... OH. WELL, I SUPPOSE NOT.

ON THE DAY OF THE BALL, I GAVE HER AN ENORMOUS DIAMOND, AND WE STRODE DOWN THE RED CARPET TOGETHER. I WAS POSITIVELY PREENING.



WHAT COULD THIS POSSIBLY HAVE TO DO WITH--

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL MOMENT. A SOCIAL TRIUMPH!

AND THEN HER FRIENDS STARTED TO ARRIVE. EACH GIRL HAD WITH HER A MAN MORE GROTESQUE THAN THE LAST! WE WERE A FREAKSHOW! A GAG FOR THE CAMERAS!

I WAS HUMILIATED.

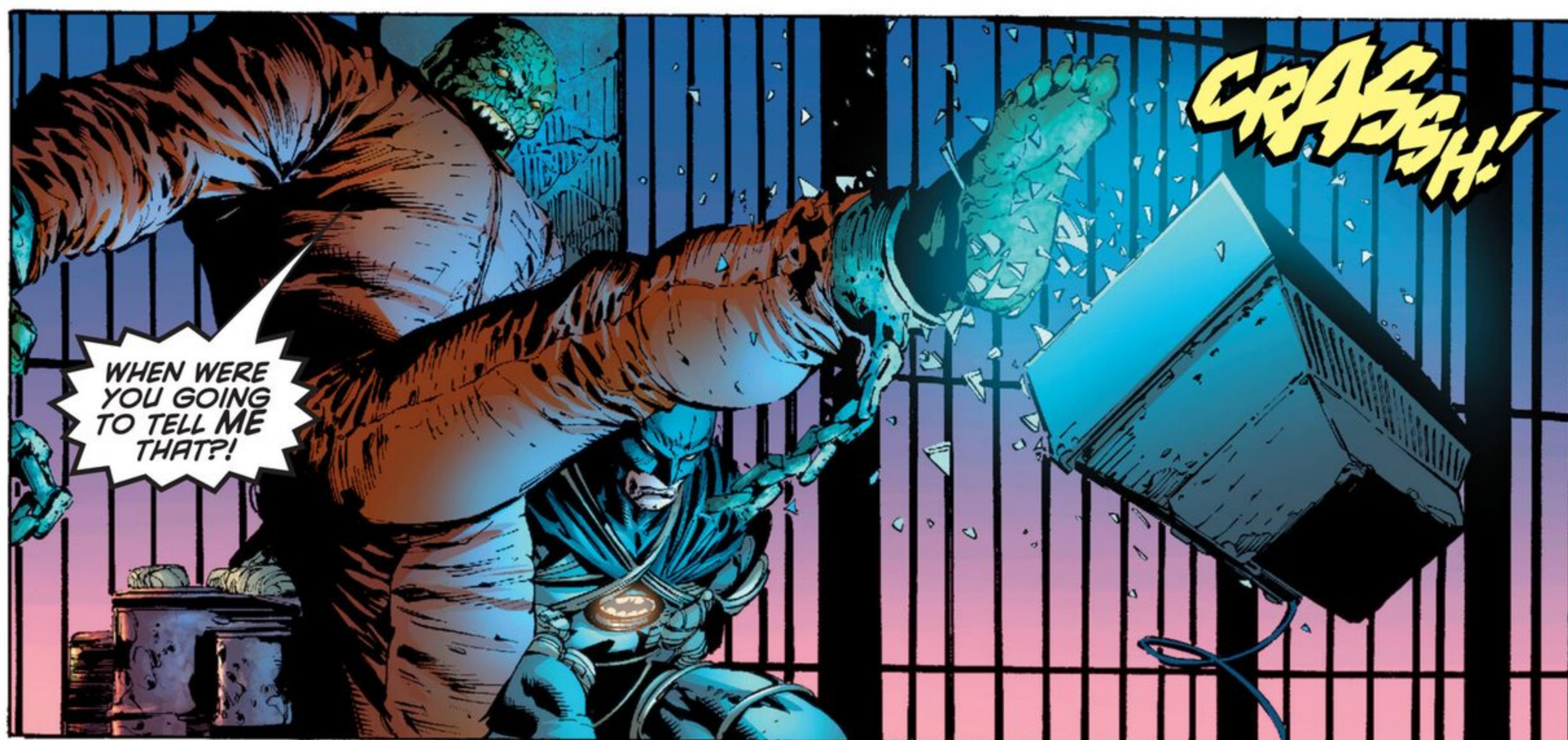


THAT KIND OF PAIN DOESN'T GO EASILY FORGOTTEN, BATMAN.

BUT I TIRE OF THIS GAME. YOUR BOMB WILL GO OFF IN... AH, EIGHT SECONDS NOW.

JUST THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW.

WHAT?!







*Dawn is nearby.
I'm sure of it.*



*Croc is too lazy to
find more than one
place to hide out.*

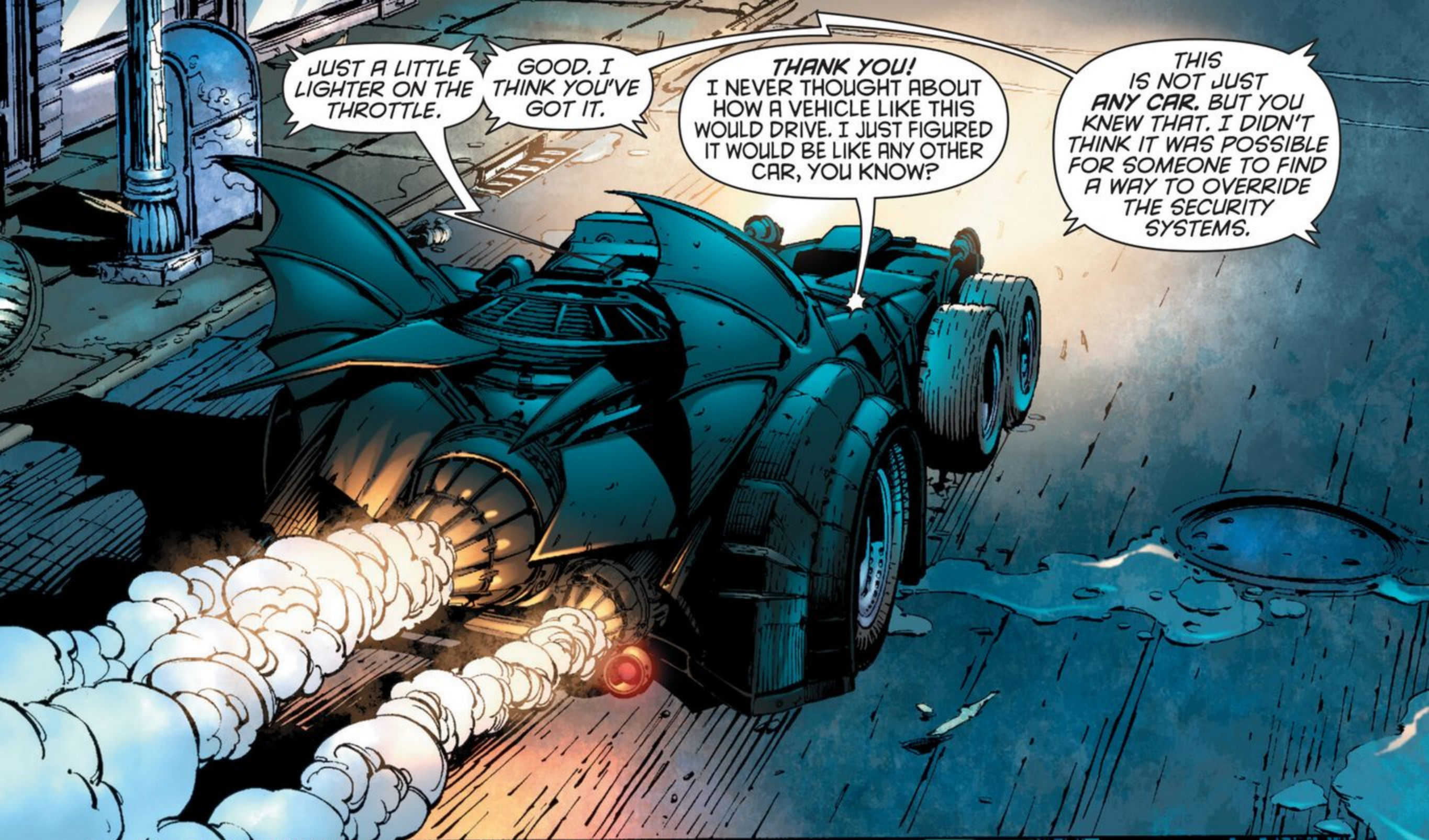


*And I saw wires
leading down
these stairs.*



*Might as well have
left me a trail of
breadcrumbs.*





JUST A LITTLE LIGHTER ON THE THROTTLE.

GOOD. I THINK YOU'VE GOT IT.

THANK YOU! I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT HOW A VEHICLE LIKE THIS WOULD DRIVE. I JUST FIGURED IT WOULD BE LIKE ANY OTHER CAR, YOU KNOW?

THIS IS NOT JUST ANY CAR. BUT YOU KNEW THAT. I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE TO FIND A WAY TO OVERRIDE THE SECURITY SYSTEMS.



WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME WHY YOU'VE TAKEN THE BATMOBILE? YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE A CRIMINAL TO ME. BUT I SUPPOSE I HAVE BEEN WRONG BEFORE...



WAIT, YOU CAN SEE ME?!



OF COURSE I CAN. YOU DON'T SEEM TO KNOW VERY MUCH ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE STOLEN.

GREAT. JUST GREAT.



PLEASE, YOU MUST NOT DO THIS.

WHOEVER--OR WHATEVER--IS FORCING YOU TO DO THIS WON'T JUST WALK AWAY WHEN THEY GET THE CAR.



I-I'M ONLY DOING WHAT I HAVE TO DO. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!



I UNDERSTAND MORE THAN YOU MIGHT THINK.

THEY WON'T LET YOU LIVE, I PROMISE YOU!



...OKAY. JUST TELL ME WHERE I NEED TO TAKE IT. I JUST WANT TO GET OUT.



*Her chest is still moving.
She's alive, but barely.*

*The heat in here
is unbearable.*





Every second counts.

She's so beautiful, it takes my breath away. I have to force myself not to stare.

DAWN, I NEED TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?



UHNNN...



SO HOT...

->COUGH-COUGH<-

I NEED WATER.



LET'S GET YOU OUT OF THIS ROOM FIRST.

BATMAN?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT RIGHT NOW. CAN YOU STAND?

I-I DON'T KNOW.

I'LL CARRY YOU.





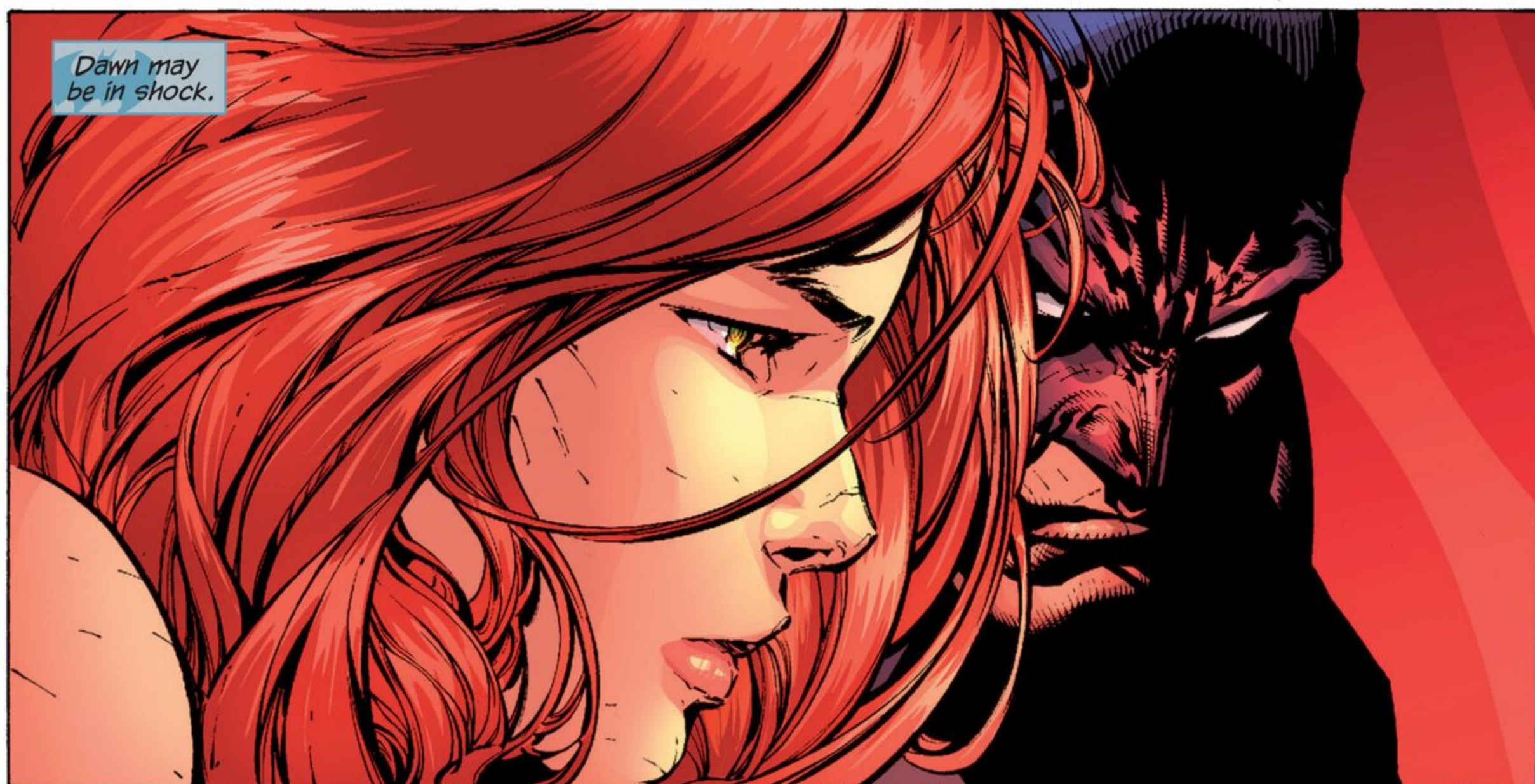
The Batmobile?
Odd...



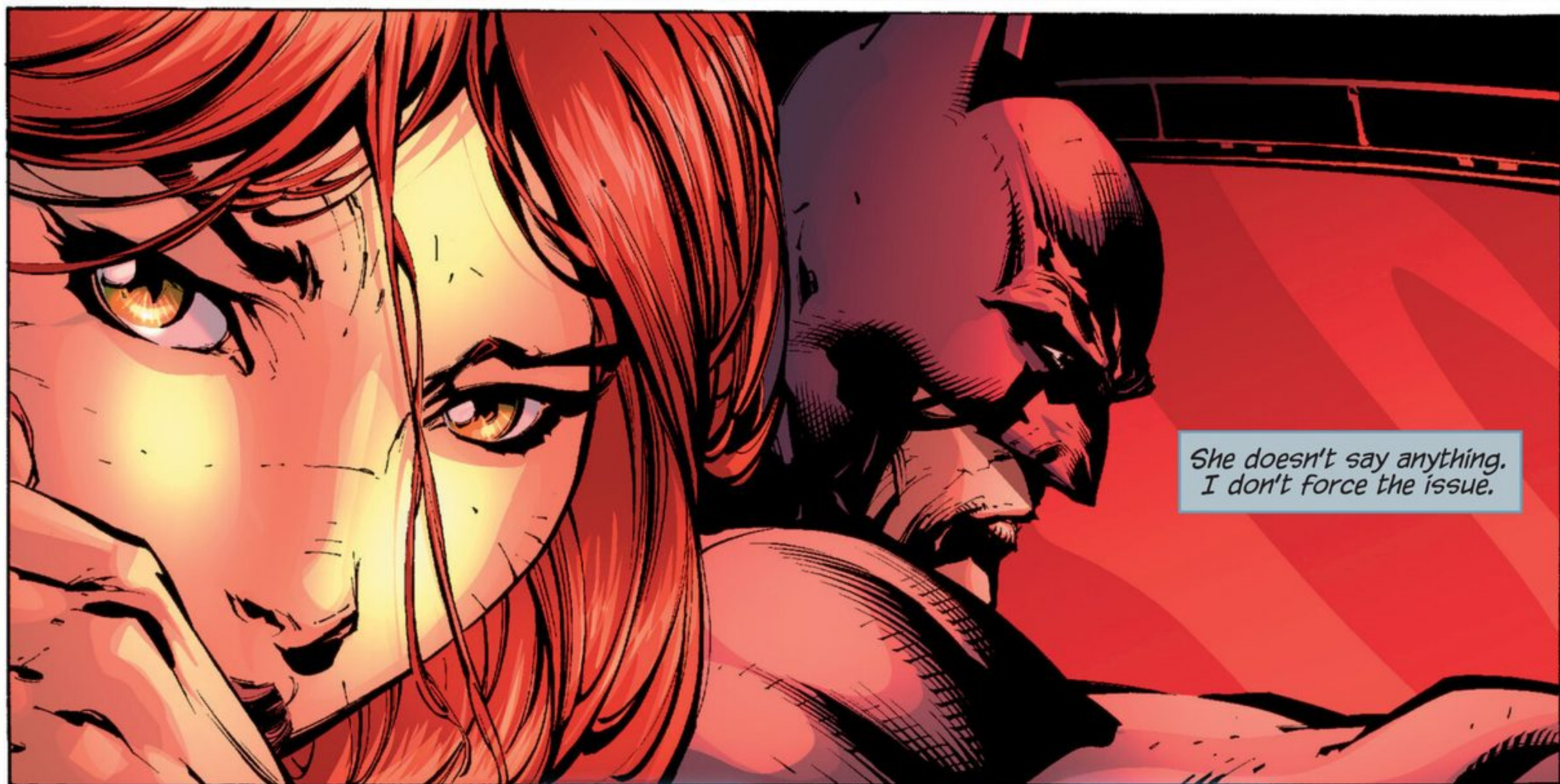
...but a lifesaver,
nonetheless.



Who?



Dawn may
be in shock.



She doesn't say anything.
I don't force the issue.



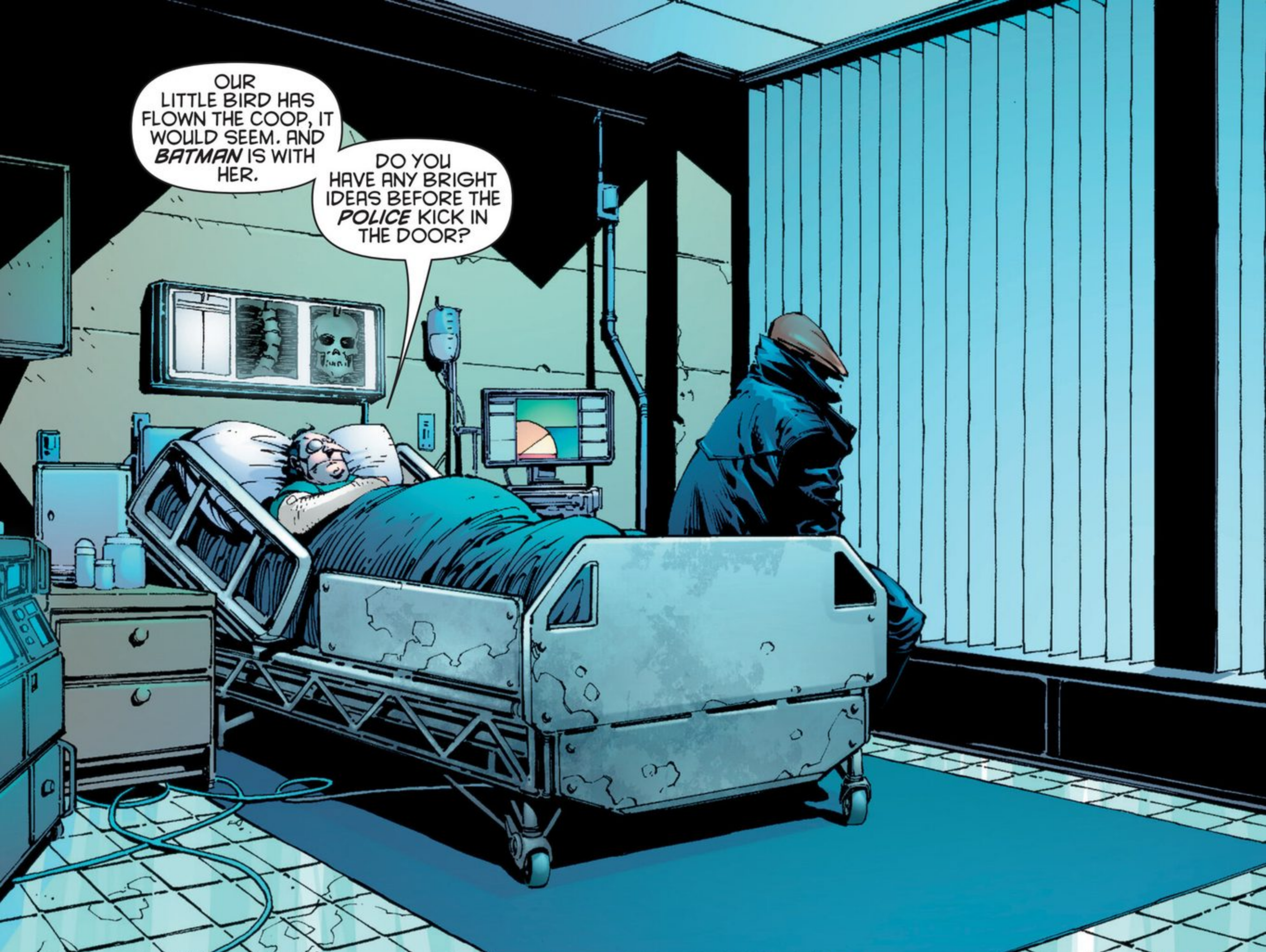
HUFF
HUFF



HOW
COULD I BE SO
STUPID?!



AND **NOW**
WHAT AM I
GOING TO
DO?

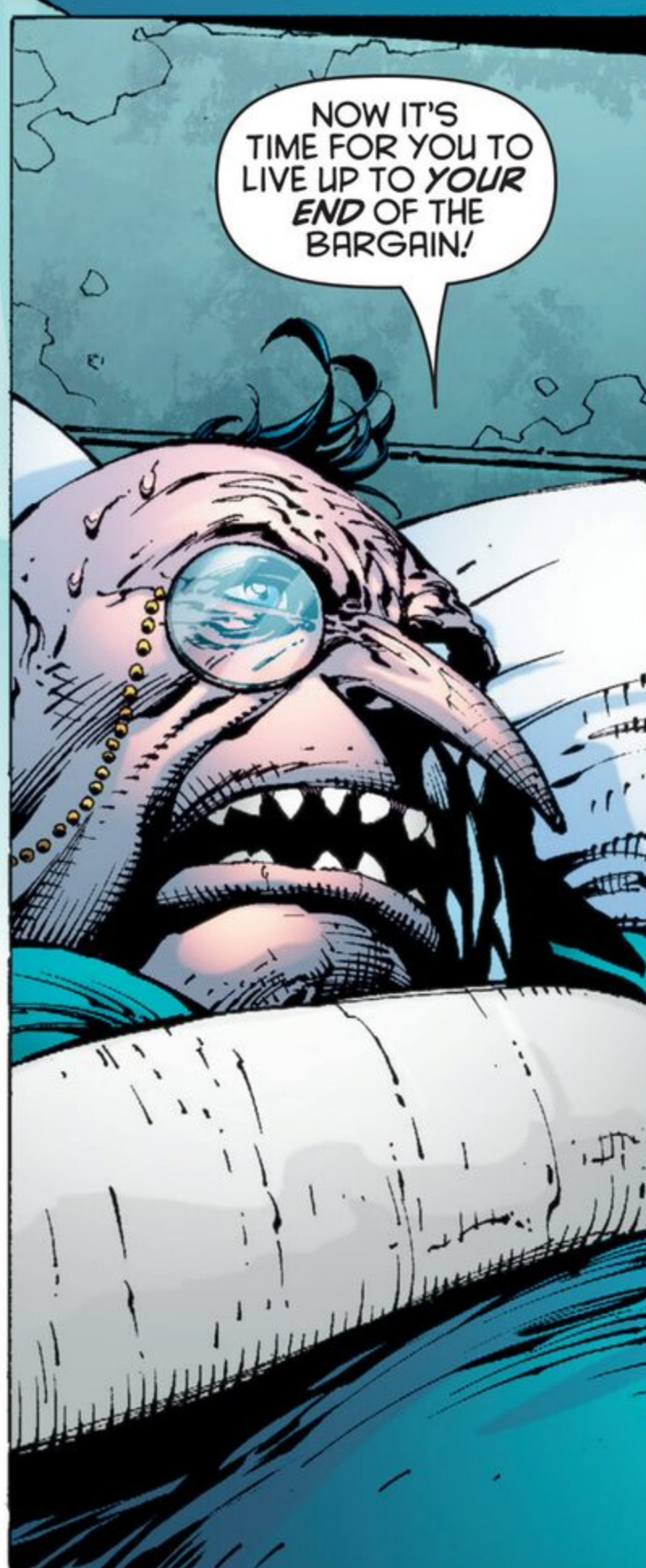


OUR
LITTLE BIRD HAS
FLOWN THE COOP, IT
WOULD SEEM. AND
BATMAN IS WITH
HER.

DO YOU
HAVE ANY BRIGHT
IDEAS BEFORE THE
POLICE KICK IN
THE DOOR?



I DID
EVERYTHING YOU
ASKED, JUST THE
WAY YOU *ASKED*
FOR IT TO BE
DONE!



NOW IT'S
TIME FOR YOU TO
LIVE UP TO *YOUR*
**END OF THE
BARGAIN!**



I THINK
THAT YOU DID
WONDERFULLY!
BUT I DIDN'T
COME HERE TO
TELL YOU
THAT.

I NEED YOU
TO DO ONE
MORE THING
FOR ME, I'M
AFRAID.



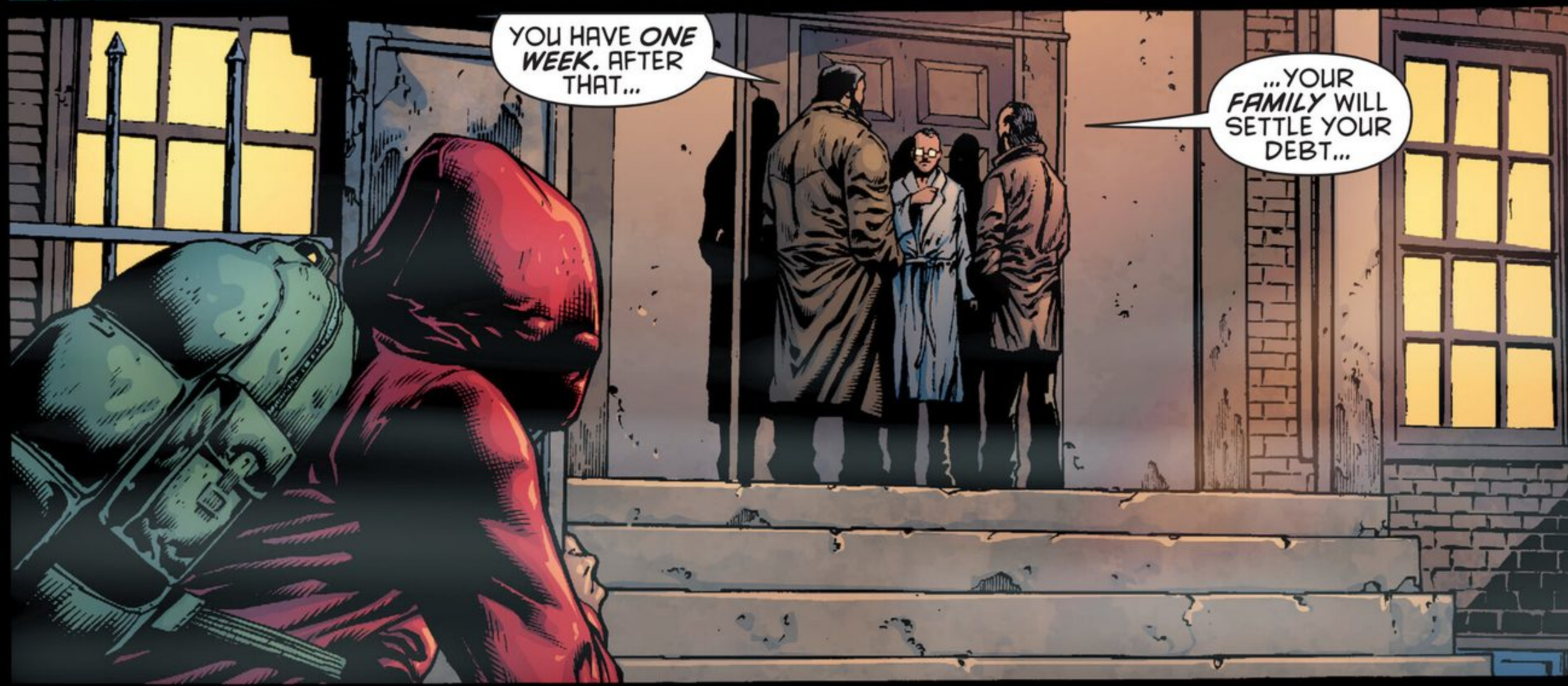
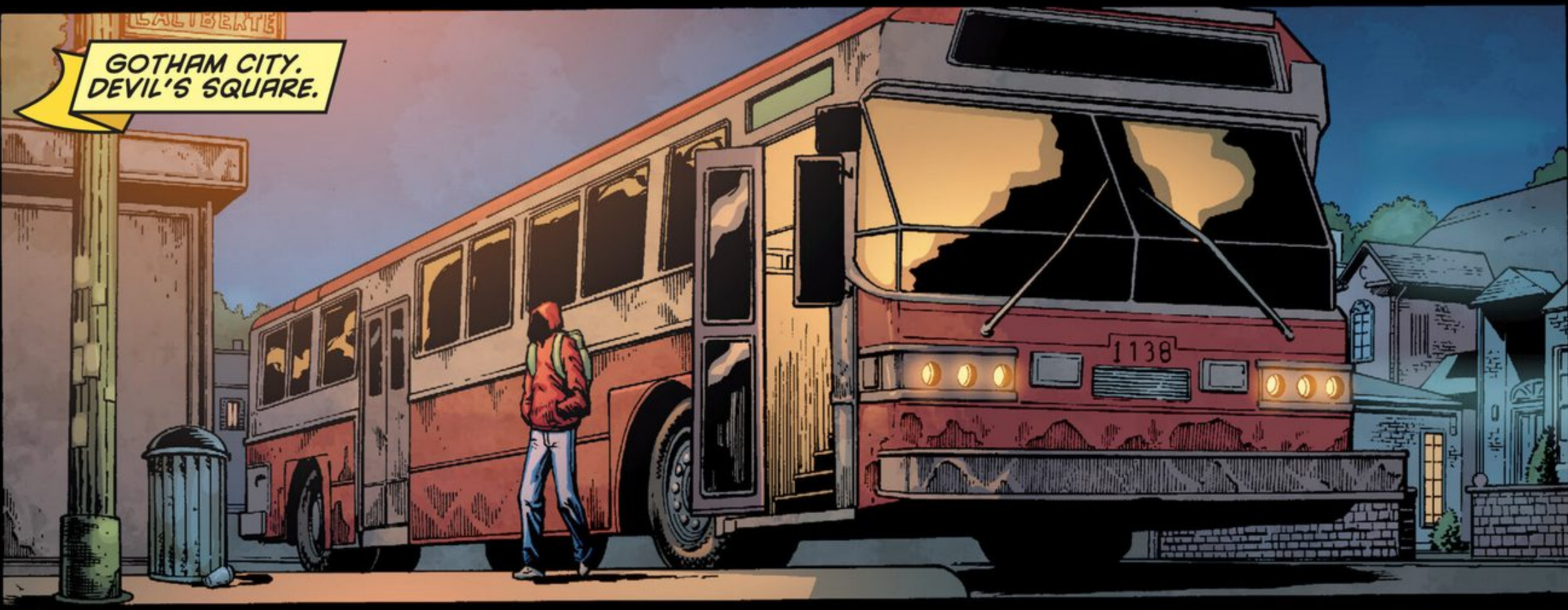
JUST
ONE MORE
VERY *SMALL*
THING.

I NEED YOU
TO OPEN THE
GATES OF
HELL!

BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT #4 cover
Art by DAVID FINCH, SCOTT WILLIAMS and ALEX SINCLAIR



FINCH
WILLIAMS
SINCLAIR





...IN
BLOOD!



NO!
YOU
CAN'T--!

YOU HAVE
A WEEK.

BUT I'VE BEEN
FIRED! I NO LONGER
HAVE ACCESS TO WAYNE
INDUSTRIES' SECRETS!
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO
TELL YOU THA--

ENOUGH!
NO MORE
EXCUSES!



ONE
WEEK!

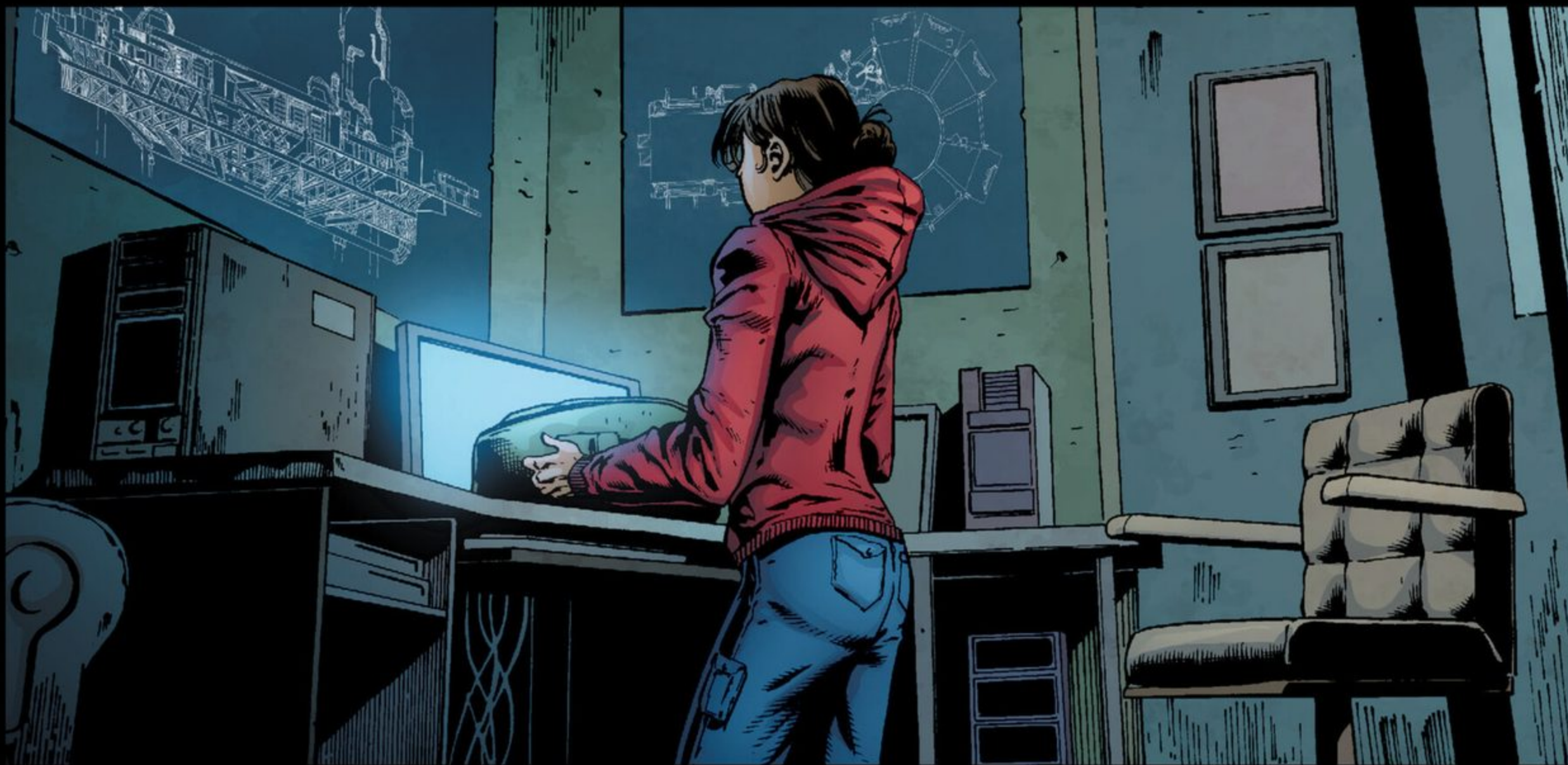


PLEASE, OLD MAN--
DISAPPOINT ME.
I HAVEN'T KILLED A WHOLE
FAMILY FOR AT LEAST
A YEAR.



I MISS THE
PLEASURE.





MEANWHILE...
IN THE SEWERS
OF GOTHAM.

I KNOW
YOU ARE CLOSE,
LITTLE DEMON...
I CAN **SMELL**
YOUR **FEAR**.

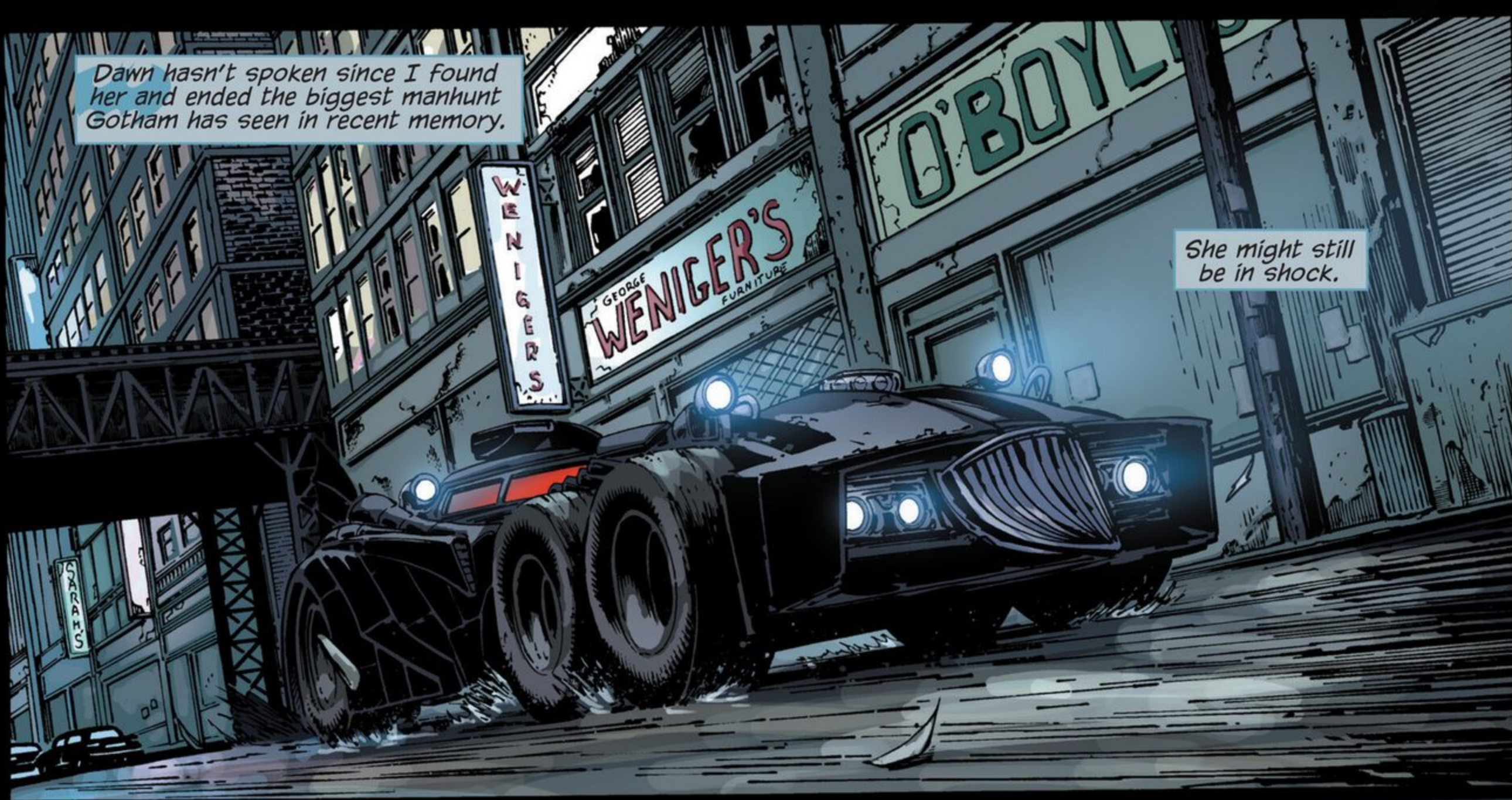


COME OUT,
COME OUT, LITTLE
ONE...COME FACE
ETRIGAN!

ARRGGHH!

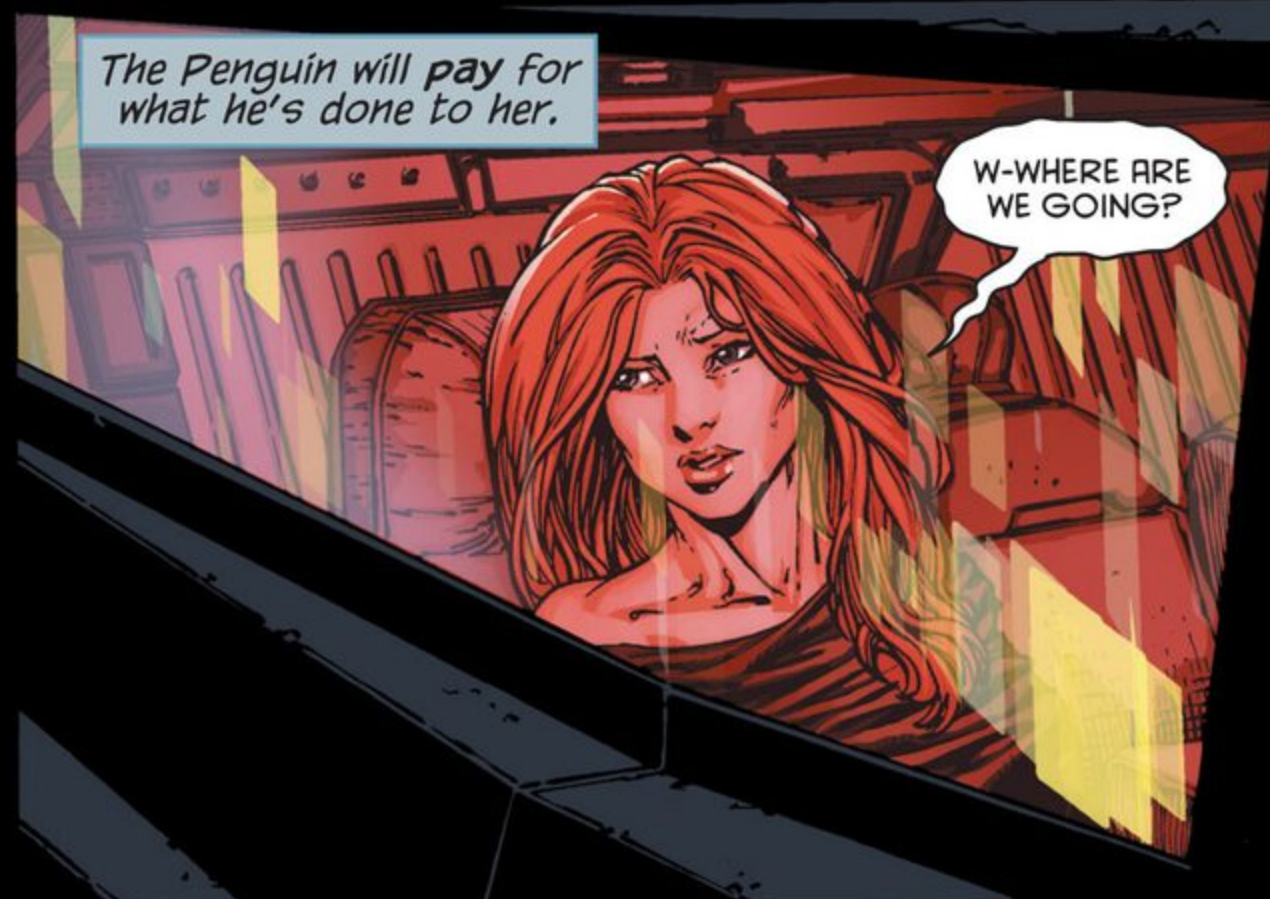
TREACHEROUS
FOOL! WE ARE *FAR*
TOO POWERFUL
FOR YOU NOW!

CRASH



Dawn hasn't spoken since I found her and ended the biggest manhunt Gotham has seen in recent memory.

She might still be in shock.



The Penguin will *pay* for what he's done to her.

W-WHERE ARE WE GOING?



JUST TRY TO RELAX, DAWN. YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT, BUT YOU'RE **SAFE** NOW.



NO. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I'M **NOT** SAFE. I CAN NEVER BE SAFE!

HE'LL FIND ME!

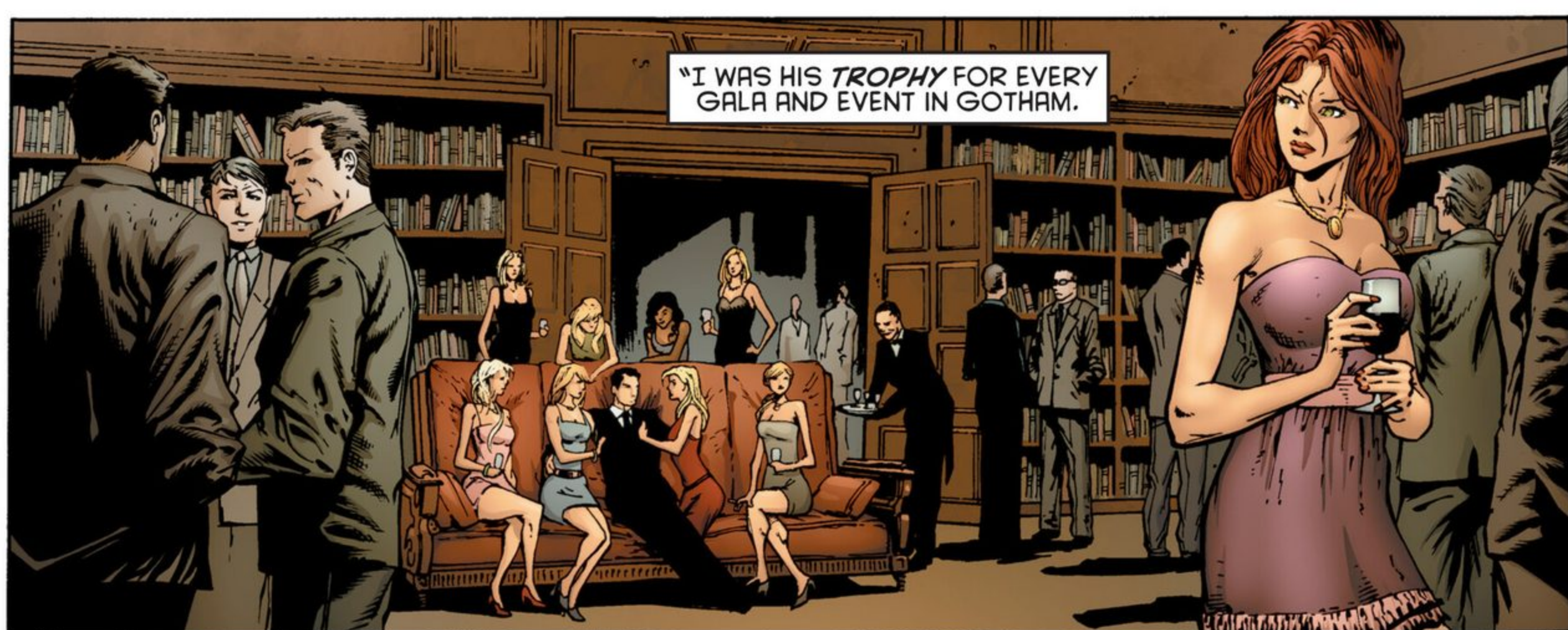
I'LL DEAL WITH PENGUIN. YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY--

NO!



"NOT PENGUIN--I'VE BEEN RUNNING **MUCH LONGER** THAN THAT.

"SINCE I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, THE ONLY PLACE I EVER FELT REALLY SAFE WAS IN MY HEAD."



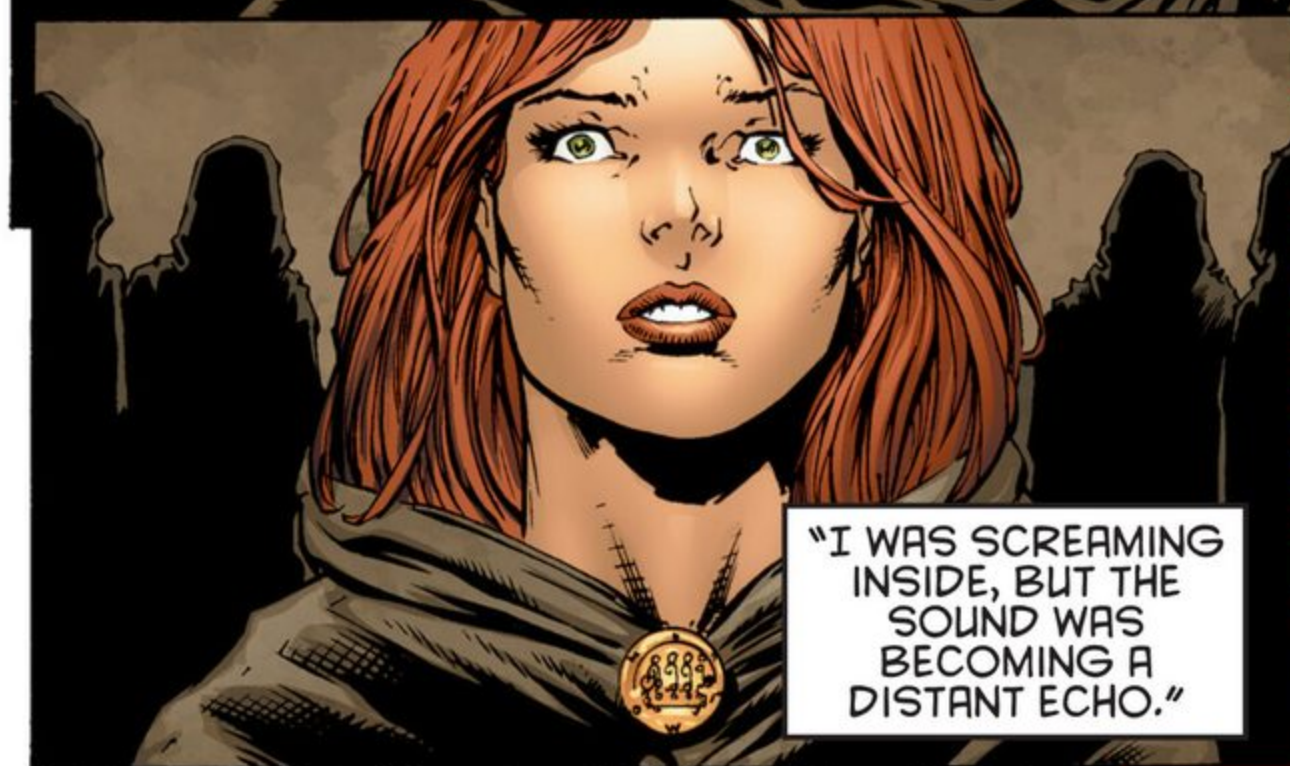
"I WAS HIS *TROPHY* FOR EVERY GALA AND EVENT IN GOTHAM.



"MY *FATHER*... MY FATHER KEPT ME AS HIS *PRISONER*.

"HE TOLD ME THAT MY *SOUL* BELONGED TO A *GREATER CAUSE*. HE HAD SO MANY FOLLOWERS, I THOUGHT HE MUST BE RIGHT.

"I SAT NUMBLY THROUGH DARK AND TWISTED RITUALS...WONDERING... WOULD I BE NEXT...?"

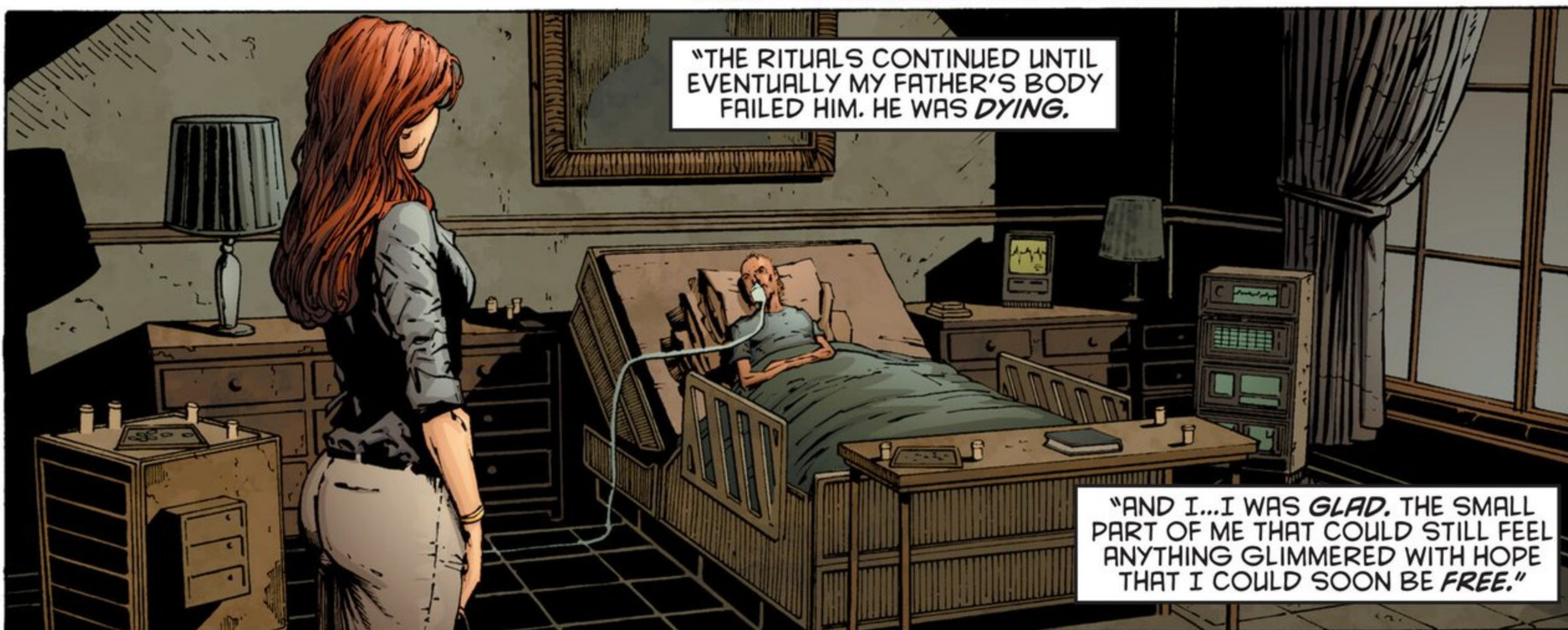


"I WAS SCREAMING INSIDE, BUT THE SOUND WAS BECOMING A DISTANT ECHO."



BUT...YOUR FATHER IS *DEAD*. HE CAN'T HURT YOU NOW--

PLEASE. J-JUST LISTEN.



"THE RITUALS CONTINUED UNTIL EVENTUALLY MY FATHER'S BODY FAILED HIM. HE WAS *DYING*.

"AND I...I WAS *GLAD*. THE SMALL PART OF ME THAT COULD STILL FEEL ANYTHING GLIMMERED WITH HOPE THAT I COULD SOON BE *FREE*."

"HE LAY THERE WASTED AND DYING AND ALONE, BUT HE WOULDN'T LET ME GO SO EASILY."



"ON THE NIGHT THAT HE DIED, HE CALLED ME OVER TO HIS BEDSIDE--MY LEGS MOVED AGAINST MY WILL."



"HE REACHED OUT AND TOOK MY AMULET IN HIS HAND."

"I WAS TO BE *SACRIFICED* SO THAT HE COULD BECOME HELL'S LORD ON EARTH. IT WAS MY DUTY...MY *PRIVILEGE*..."



"IT WAS THE AMULET HE GAVE ME WHEN I WAS BORN. HE ALWAYS TOLD ME THAT IT MARKED ME FOR A *HIGHER CALLING*."

"HE SCREAMED AND STRUCK OUT AT ME, BUT HE WAS TOO FRAIL. I DODGED HIM EASILY. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I EVER *DISOBEYED* HIM."



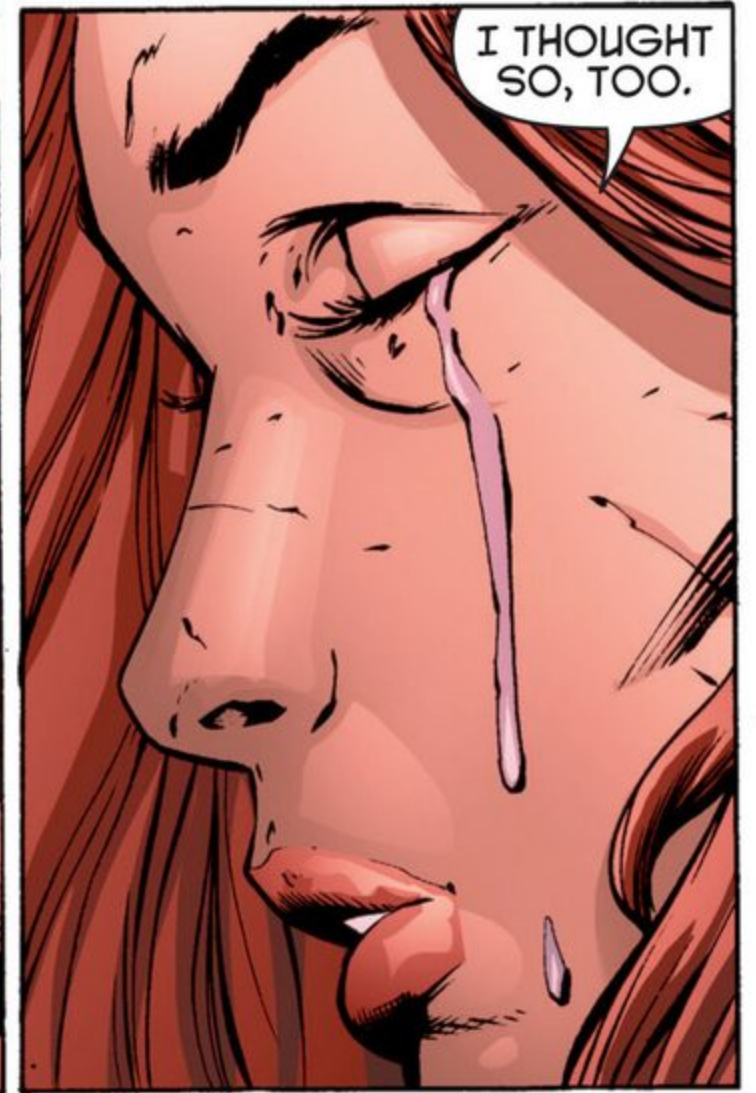
"MY HEAD WAS SPINNING, BUT HIS HOLD ON ME BROKE. I RAN AND RAN AND *NEVER LOOKED BACK*."

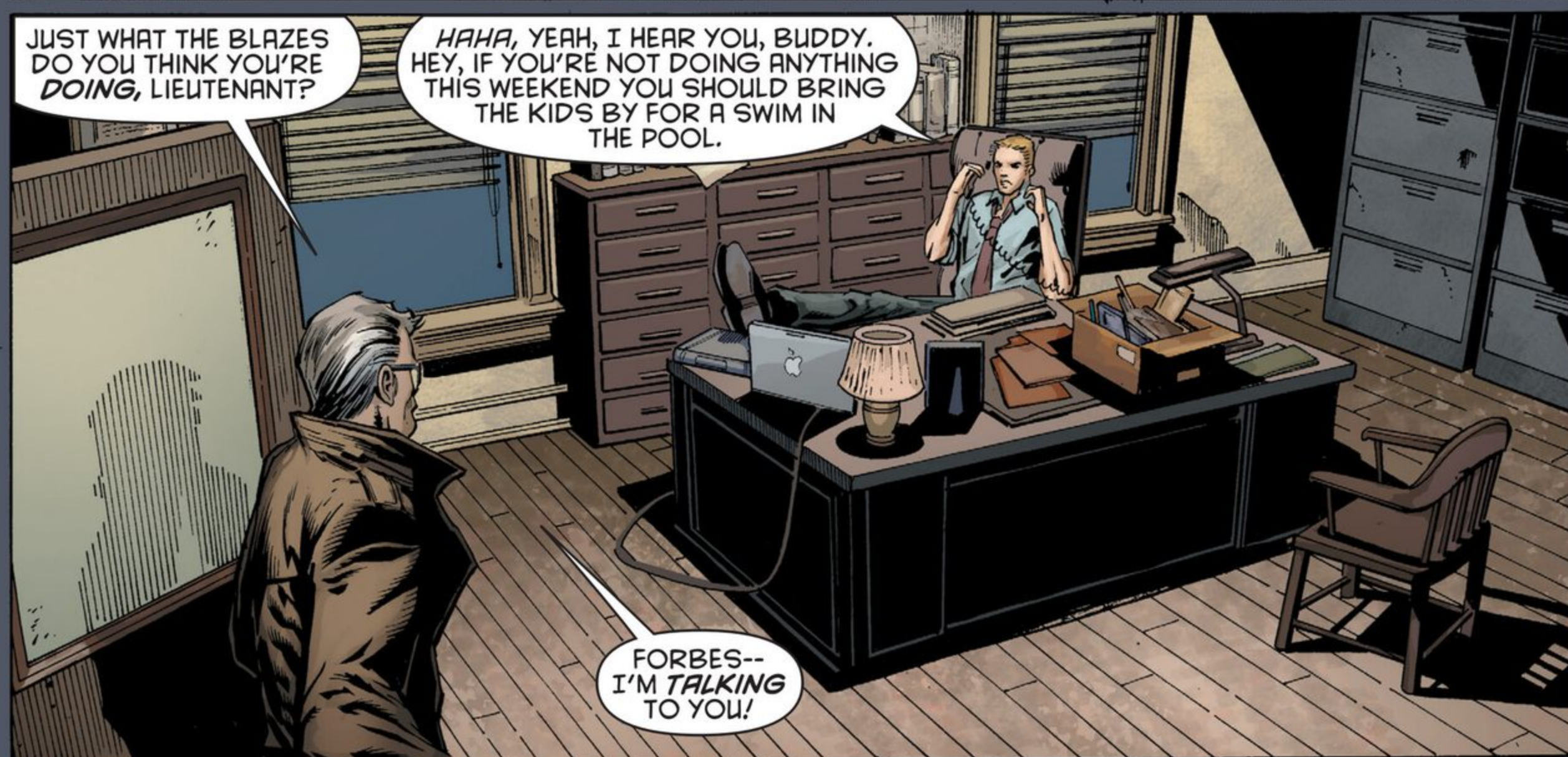
DAWN, HE WAS AN EVIL, CRAZY MAN.

BUT HE'S DEAD NOW.



I THOUGHT SO, TOO.







HANG ON JUST A SEC, BOBBY.

I'LL BE WITH YOU IN A MINUTE, JAMES. TAKE A SEAT.

GET THE HELL OFF MY PHONE! YOU'VE STEPPED WAY OVER THE LINE, LIEUTENANT!

WHOA, SLOW DOWN, OLD MAN. DON'T GIVE YOURSELF A HEART ATTACK.



AND YOU'RE BARGING INTO MY OFFICE NOW. STRAIGHT FROM MAYOR HADY.

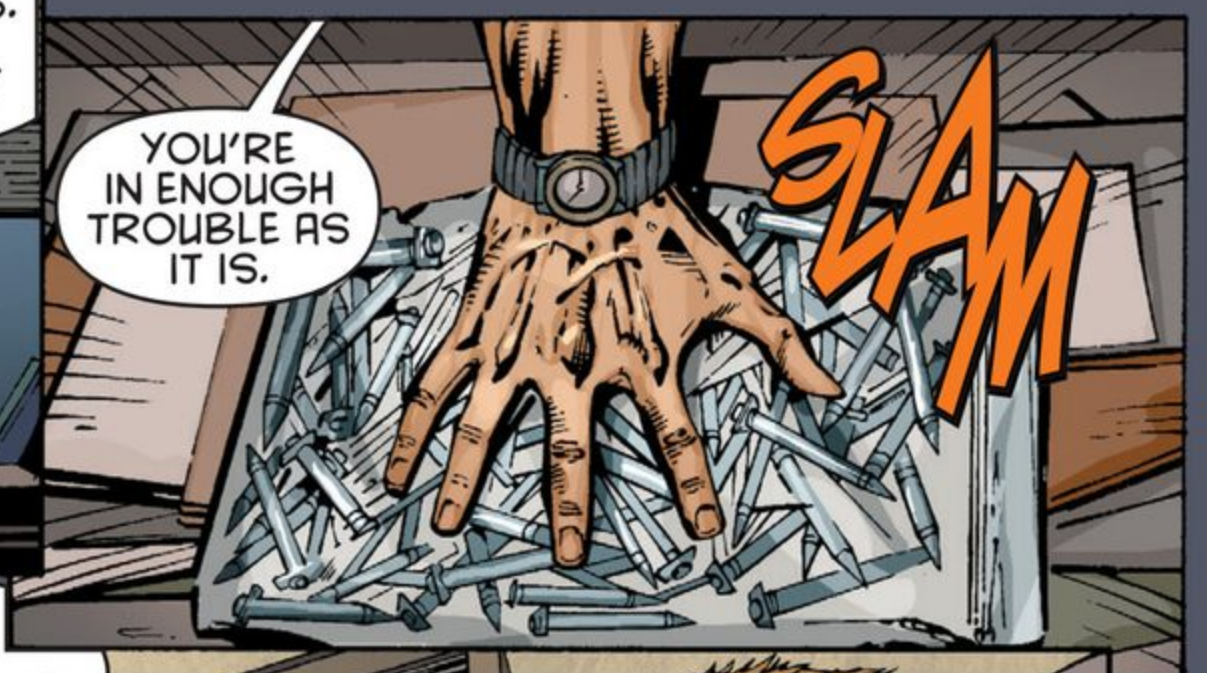
YOU'RE ON PAID LEAVE. I *BEGGED* HIM TO LET ME TELL YOU MYSELF.



WHAT?! I'LL DRAG YOU OUTTA HERE MYSELF, YOU SMUG LITTLE PUNK!



TEMPER, TEMPER, JAMES. DON'T WANT TO ADD ASSAULT TO YOUR LIST OF CHARGES.



YOU'RE IN ENOUGH TROUBLE AS IT IS.

STREET-GRADE *VENOM*. NASTY STUFF. YOU'VE BEEN UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR A LONG TIME ON THIS, JAMES.

SUCH A SHAME, TOO. I HATE TO SEE A COP *DISGRACE* HIMSELF AND THE FORCE LIKE THIS.



WHAT KIND OF AMATEUR HOUR GARBAGE IS *THIS*?! I'M GOING TO HAVE YOU STRIPPED DOWN TO *PARKING ENFORCEMENT*, YOU WEASEL!

AND ANOTHER THING...



YOU NEED TO MAKE YOURSELF PRESENTABLE BEFORE I TAKE YOU DOWN TO TALK TO COMMISSIONER GORDON.

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE EVERY NEWS OUTLET IN GOTHAM AND BEYOND ON YOU THE MINUTE IT'S REVEALED YOU'VE BEEN FOUND.

WHAT?! NO! YOU CAN'T DO THAT!



AH, MY FAITHFUL
ETRIGAN. WOULD
YOU REALLY HARM
MY SERVANT?

BLAZE!



I HAD TURNED AWAY FROM YOU, MY LOVE, BUT I SEE YOU ONCE MORE.

EVEN WITHOUT YOUR RANK OF OFFICE, YOU ARE POWERFUL. RETURN TO ME AT ONCE, LOYAL ONE, AND I WILL GIVE YOU BACK YOUR RHYME.



POWER AND STATUS IN HELL. YOUR RIGHTFUL RANK RETURNED. COME TO ME AND TAKE IT BACK, MY LOVE.

YES... ANYTHING FOR THAT.



NOOO!

I AM IN CONTROL NOW, JASON BLOOD! I WILL HAVE MY POWER RETURNED!



I AM YOURS, DARK LADY.



THEN RISE.



NOW
NOTHING CAN
STAND IN
OUR WAY.



IT IS
TIME...

"... OUR ENEMIES
STAND WAITING."



THANK YOU FOR
BRINGING ME HERE
FIRST, BUT I'M
READY TO GO.

THIS PLACE BELONGS
TO SOMEONE ELSE. I FEEL
LIKE I WAS A *DIFFERENT*
PERSON WHEN I WAS
HERE LAST. LIKE I LIVED
UNDER A FOG.

YOUR AMULET.
I HAD IT FOR A
VERY SHORT TIME,
AND I ALMOST
LOST MYSELF.

YOU HAD
IT YOUR
WHOLE
LIFE.

AND NOW I'M FREE
OF IT, BUT NOT OF
HIM. MY FATHER IS
STILL OUT THERE
HUNTING ME.



"AFTER I LEFT MY FATHER
FOR DEAD, I SPENT YEARS
TRYING TO FIND MYSELF.

"I DIDN'T KNOW WHO I WAS, AND
I FELT MORE COMFORTABLE
SURROUNDED BY PARTIES AND
DISTRACTIONS.

The Cat's Meow

"A FEW WEEKS AGO, I WAS
LEAVING A NIGHTCLUB AFTER A
LOT OF DRINKING AND DANCING.

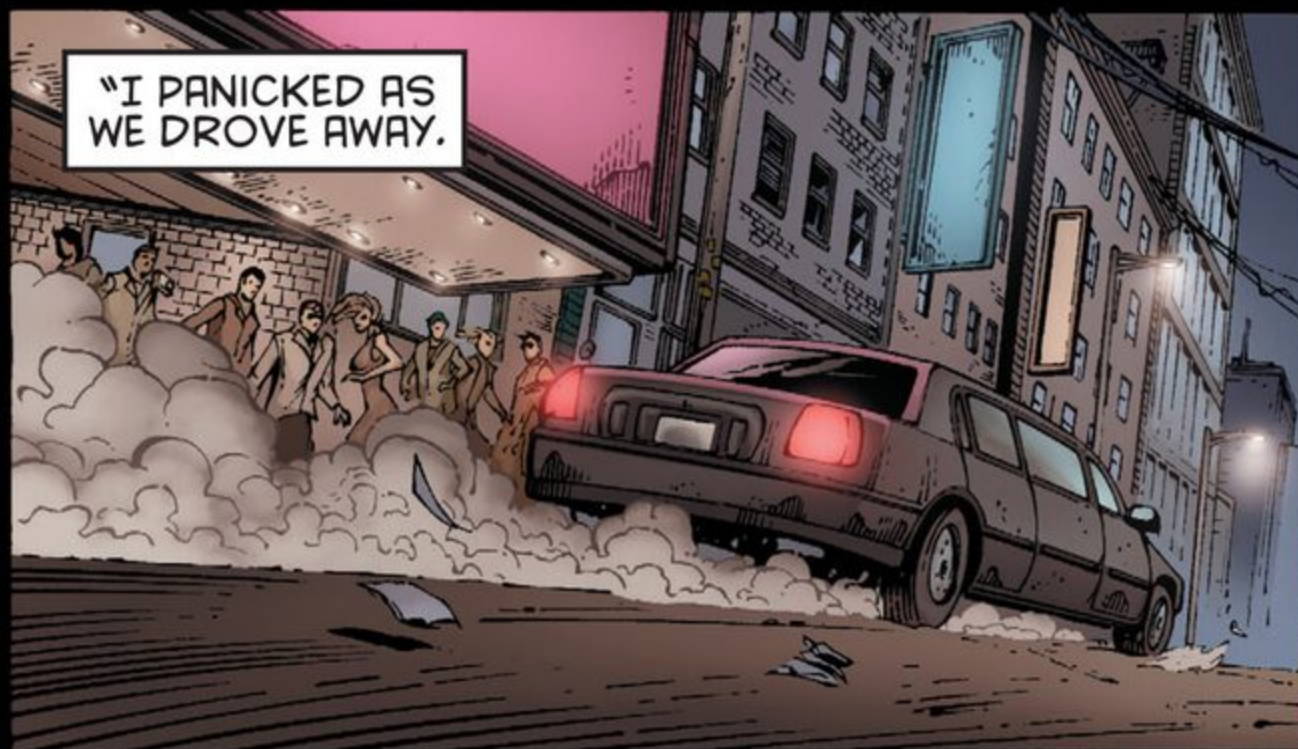
"I TOLD THE DRIVER
TO TAKE ME HOME.



"BUT WHEN HE
TURNED, IT WAS
SOME *HORRIBLE*
MONSTER, INSTEAD.
MY DRIVER WAS
DEAD BESIDE IT.

"IT TOLD ME THAT
I HAD DESERTED IT,
BUT AFTER YEARS
OF GROWING
STRONGER, IT WAS
READY TO RECLAIM
ME AND TAKE
MY SOUL."





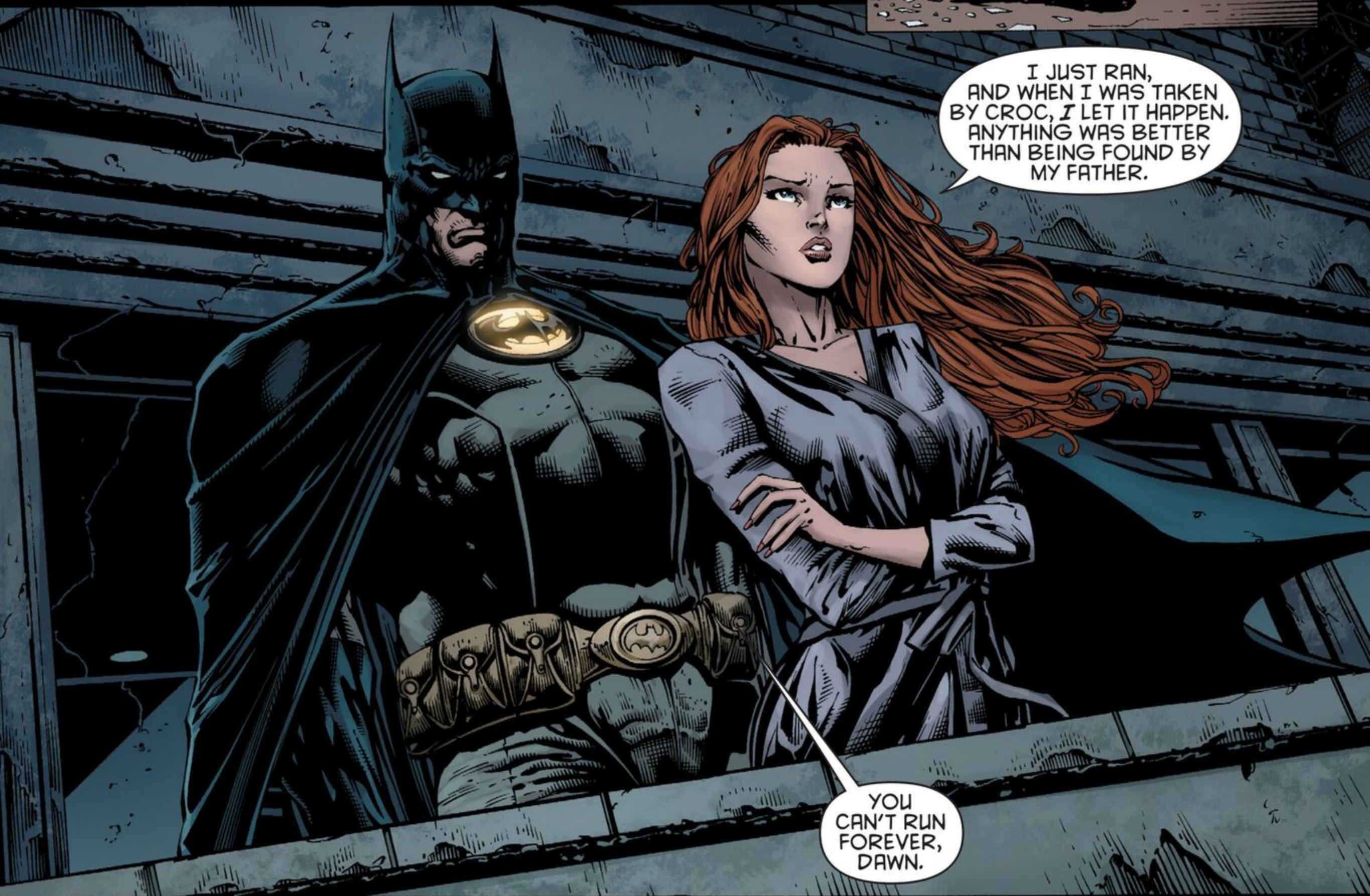
"I PANICKED AS WE DROVE AWAY."



"I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAME OVER ME, BUT I WAS **TERRIFIED**. I JUST COULDN'T GO BACK THERE...THE MONSTER'S HEAD HIT THE WHEEL."



"IT WAS MY FATHER. I **KNEW** IT. I DON'T KNOW HOW HE DID IT, BUT HE **BEAT DEATH** TO COME FOR ME!"



I JUST RAN, AND WHEN I WAS TAKEN BY CROC, I LET IT HAPPEN. ANYTHING WAS BETTER THAN BEING FOUND BY MY FATHER.

YOU CAN'T RUN FOREVER, DAWN.



WE'LL FACE
THIS TOGETHER...
ONCE AND
FOR ALL.

BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT #5 cover
Art by DAVID FINCH, SCOTT WILLIAMS and ALEX SINCLAIR

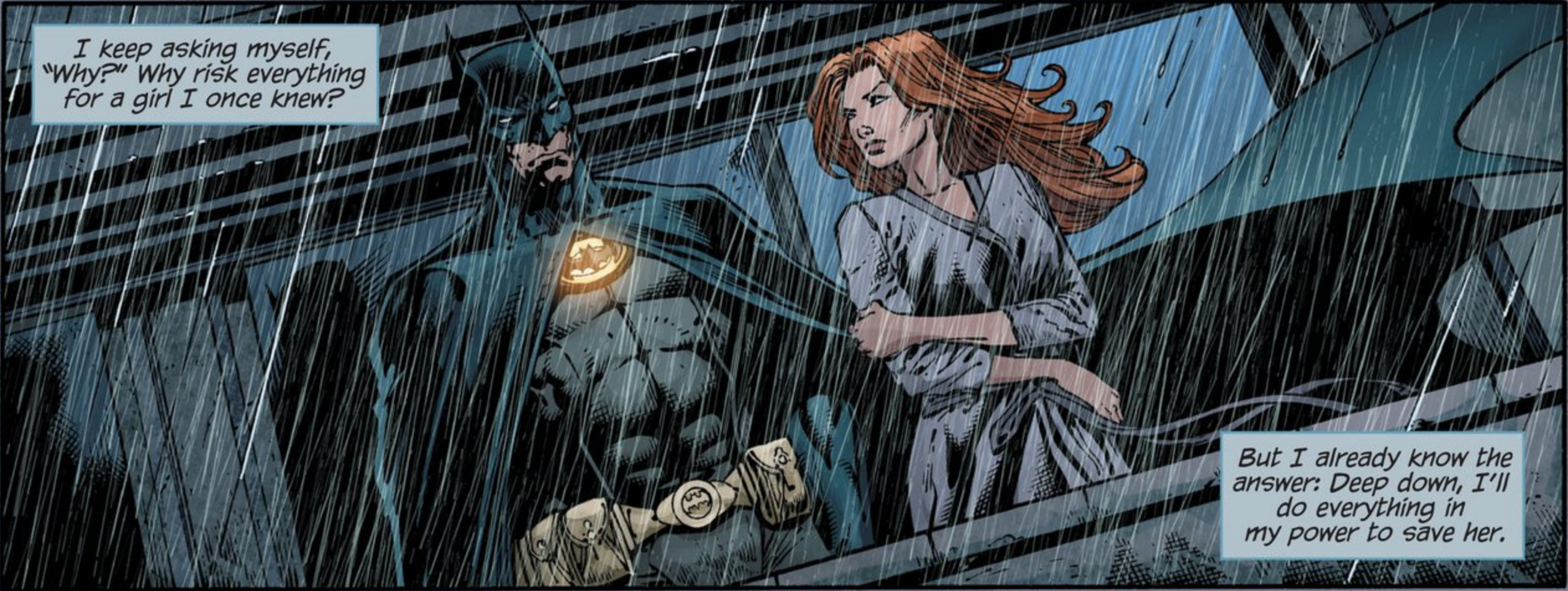




Gotham City in the rain. Always makes me think of my parents.

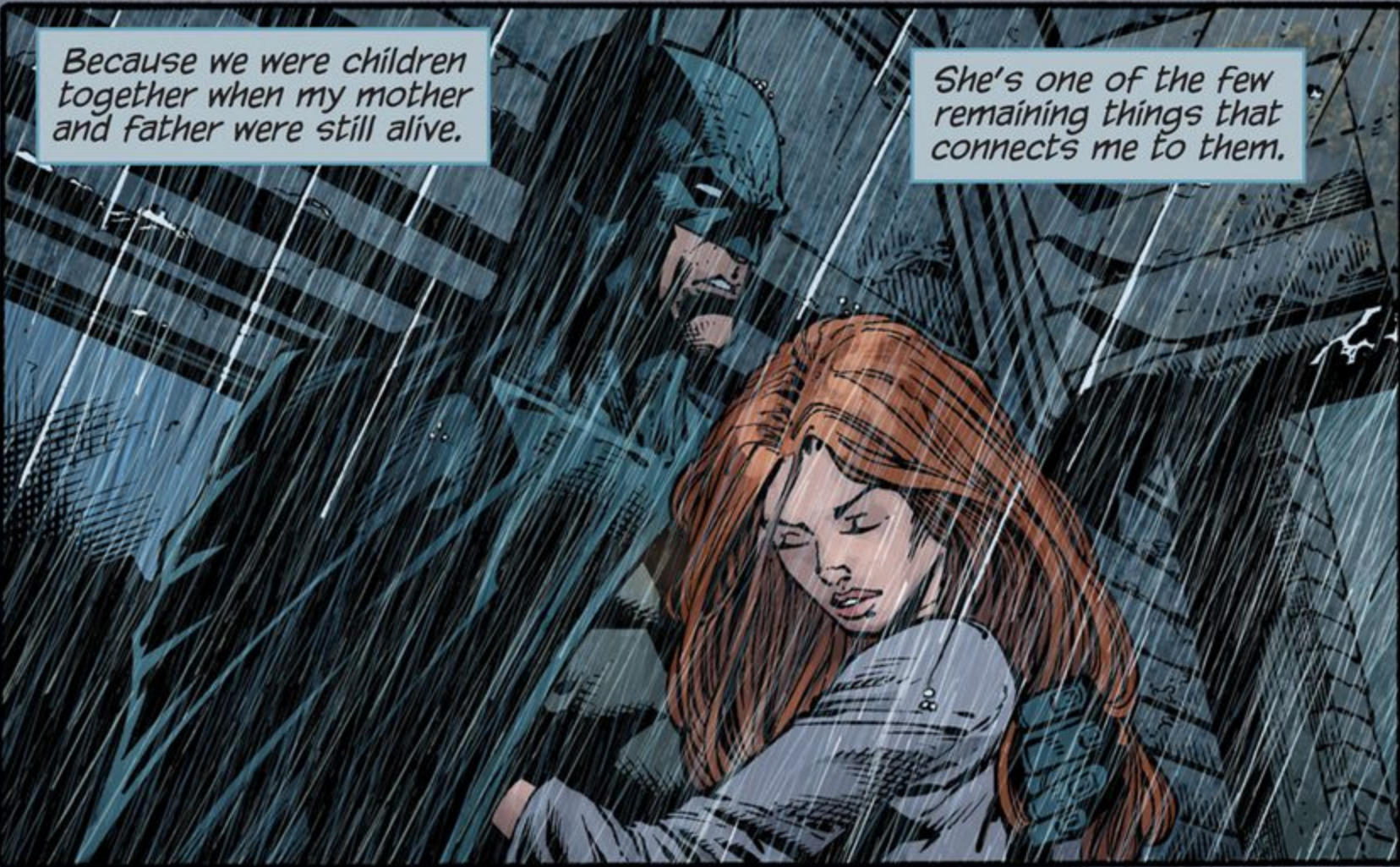
It's like a steady pounding against your heart. It's the moment you lost all the things you can never have back.

Makes you cherish the golden dawn.



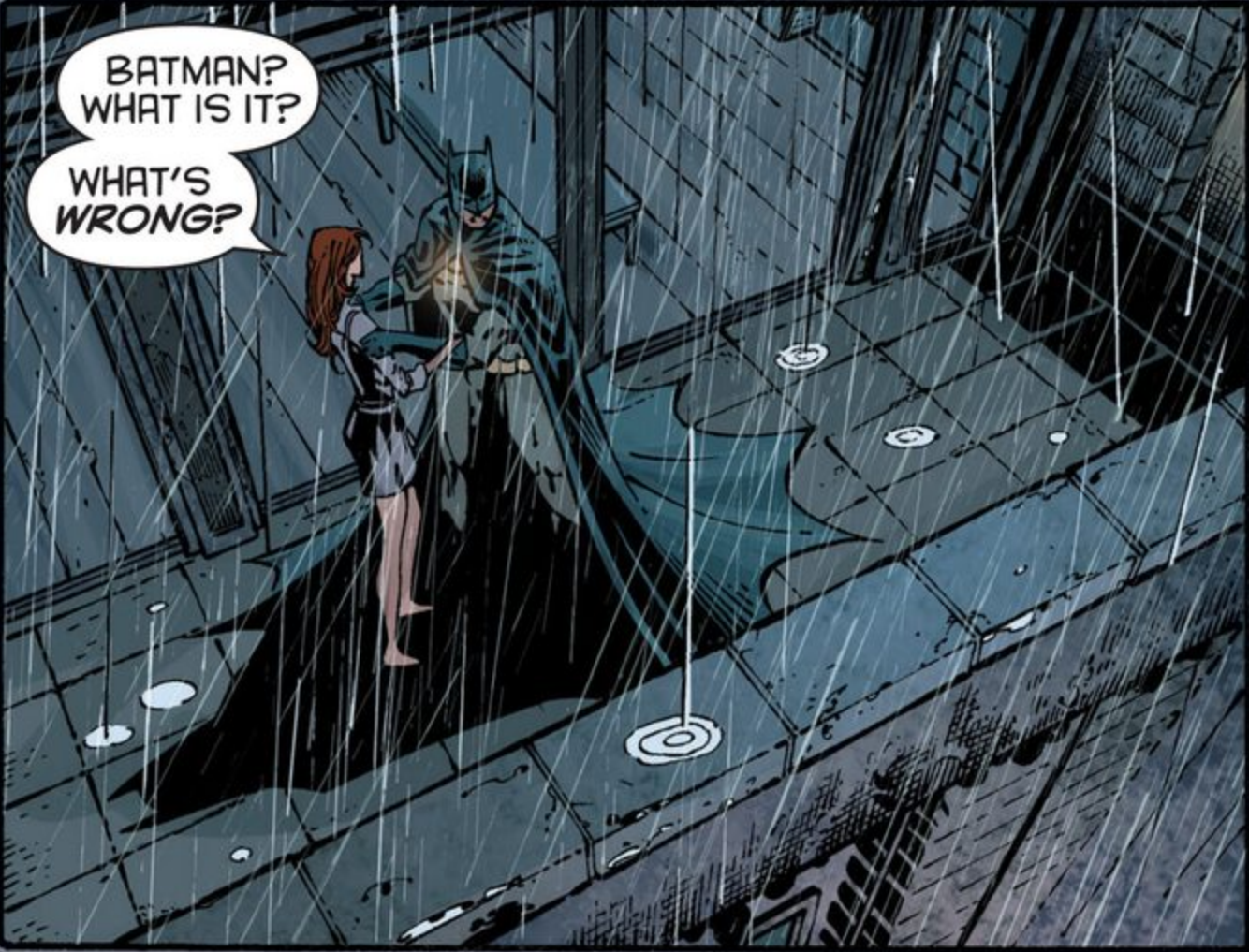
I keep asking myself, "Why?" Why risk everything for a girl I once knew?

But I already know the answer: Deep down, I'll do everything in my power to save her.



Because we were children together when my mother and father were still alive.

She's one of the few remaining things that connects me to them.



BATMAN? WHAT IS IT?

WHAT'S WRONG?



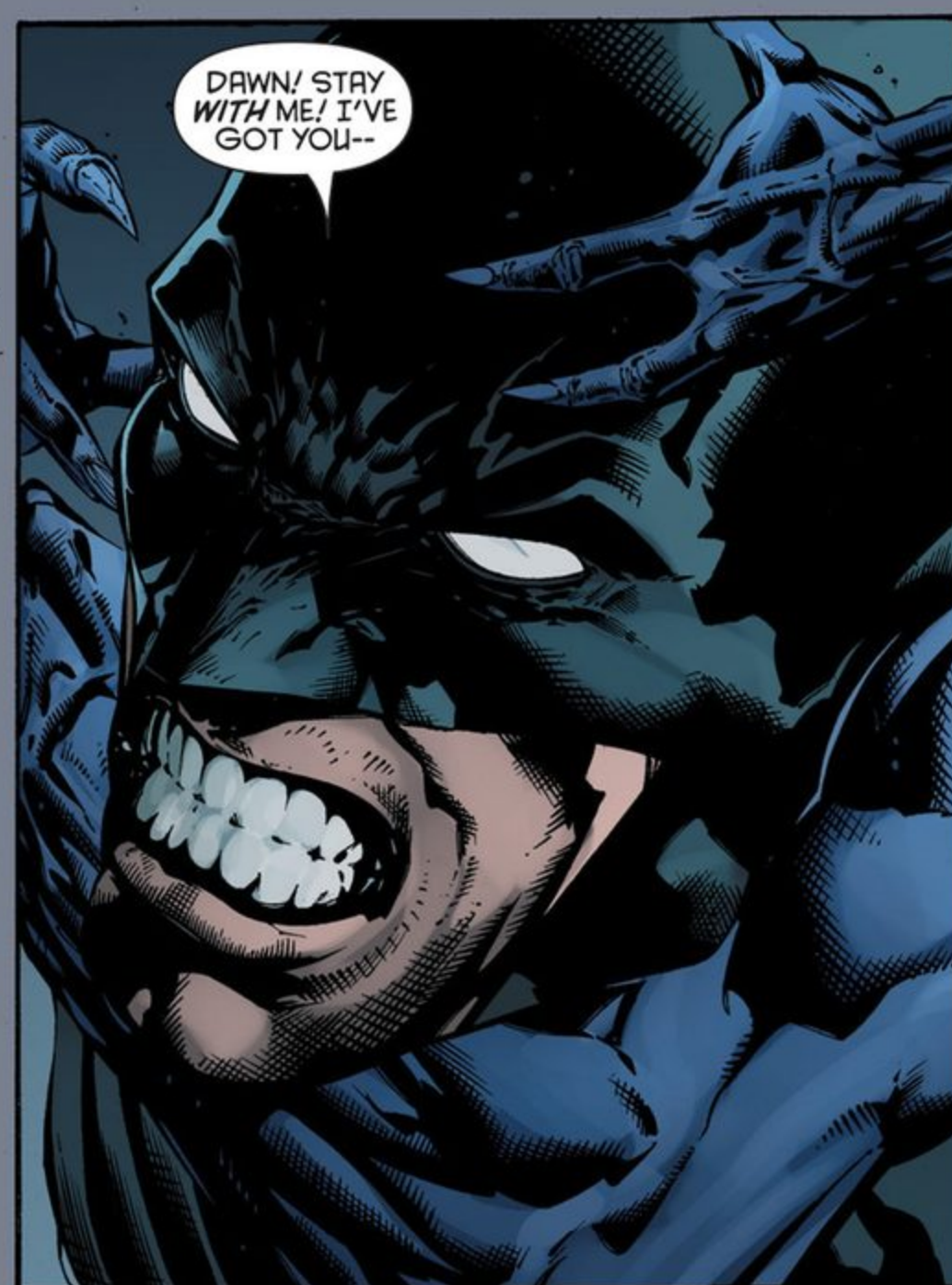
OH, MY--



DAWN!
GET BEHIND
ME AND STAY
CLOSE!

I CAN'T--

JUST
DO IT!



DAWN! STAY
WITH ME! I'VE
GOT YOU--



NO! YOU
SAID YOU'D
PROTECT
ME!



BATMAN!
YOU
PROMISED!

"YOU
PROMISED!"

I
promised.

But a promise is really
just a break in the rain.

Sun comes out
for a moment.

Just long enough
to make you hope.

DAWN?

Then it always
starts raining
again.



BATMAN!



YOU'VE PAINED
THE HEART OF MY
LADY **BLAZE**!

→EHHF!←

AND THIS
PAINS ME,
IN TURN!



BUT MY LADY
GRANTS A RETURN
OF MY POWER! AND
SO I'LL PASS YOU
THAT PAIN A
THOUSANDFOLD,
DARK KNIGHT!

BEGINNING
WITH THE CRACK
OF YOUR **HEAD**!

IN THE SEWERS
OF GOTHAM...

EX MALUM
ABBAS ADVEHO MALUM
FILIA! PROGNATUS IN
INFECTUS VISCUS. PARVULUS
QUISNAM MOS PRESTO
MALUM FATUM! IS ADDO
VITA ETERNUS!

EX MALUM
ABBAS ADVEHO MALUM
FILIA! PROGNATUS IN
INFECTUS VISCUS. PARVULUS
QUISNAM MOS PRESTO
MALUM FATUM! IS ADDO
VITA ETERNUS!

EX MALUM
ABBAS ADVEHO MALUM
FILIA! PROGNATUS IN
INFECTUS VISCUS. PARVULUS
QUISNAM MOS PRESTO
MALUM FATUM! IS ADDO
VITA ETERNUS!

EX MALUM
ABBAS ADVEHO MALUM
FILIA! PROGNATUS IN
INFECTUS VISCUS. PARVULUS
QUISNAM MOS PRESTO
MALUM FATUM! IS ADDO
VITA ETERNUS!

ENOUGH!

EX MALUM
ABBAS ADVEHO MALUM
FILIA! PROGNATUS IN
INFECTUS VISCUS. PARVULUS
QUISNAM MOS PRESTO
MALUM FATUM! IS ADDO
VITA ETERNUS!

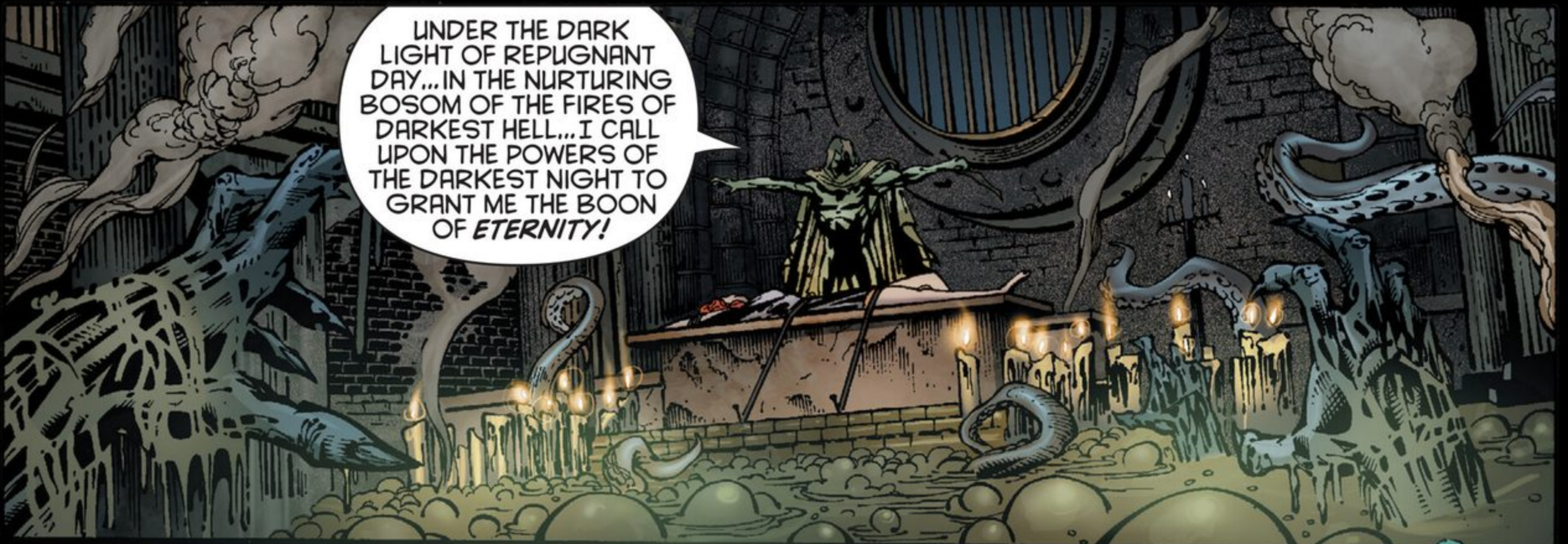
FROM THE
UNHOLY FATHER
COMES THE **UNHOLY**
DAUGHTER. BORN INTO
CORRUPTED FLESH. A
CHILD OF UNHOLY
DESTINY.

BRINGER
OF LIFE
ETERNAL!



EX MALUM ABBAS
ADVEHO MALUM FILIA!
PROGNATUS IN INFECTUS
VISCUS. PARVULUS QUISNAM
MOS PRESTO MALUM
FATUM! IS ADDO
VITA ETERNUS!

NNHH--

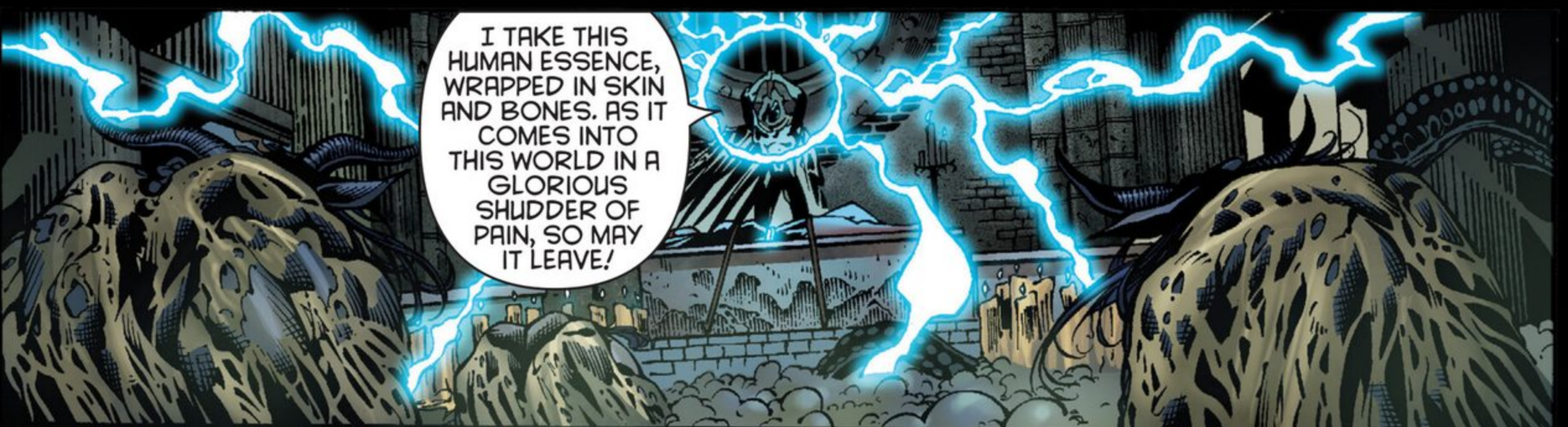


UNDER THE DARK
LIGHT OF REPUGNANT
DAY...IN THE NURTURING
BOSOM OF THE FIRES OF
DARKEST HELL...I CALL
UPON THE POWERS OF
THE DARKEST NIGHT TO
GRANT ME THE BOON
OF *ETERNITY*!



MINE IS THE
POWER, THE RIGHT
OF MIGHT AND THE
RIGHT OF ORDINANCE
OVER THIS FLESH.

FOR THIS
FLESH EXISTS
THAT I MAY
PARTAKE
OF IT.



I TAKE THIS
HUMAN ESSENCE,
WRAPPED IN SKIN
AND BONES. AS IT
COMES INTO
THIS WORLD IN A
GLORIOUS
SHUDDER OF
PAIN, SO MAY
IT LEAVE!



NOW.
DAUGHTER.

LOOK
UPON MY *TRUE*
FACE...

THIS IS HOW
IT FEELS TO FALL
INTO THE ABYSS,
BATMAN! SUFFER
AS I HAVE!

NOW YOU WILL
DIE--AS MY LADY
COMMANDS!

I'M NOT
YOUR ENEMY,
ETRIGAN!
SHE IS!

NO! TO HER,
MY ALLEGIANCE!
SHE RETURNED
THE POWER I
HAD LOST!

I AM THE
INSTRUMENT
OF YOUR
DEMISE!

POONT

FSSSS

NO.

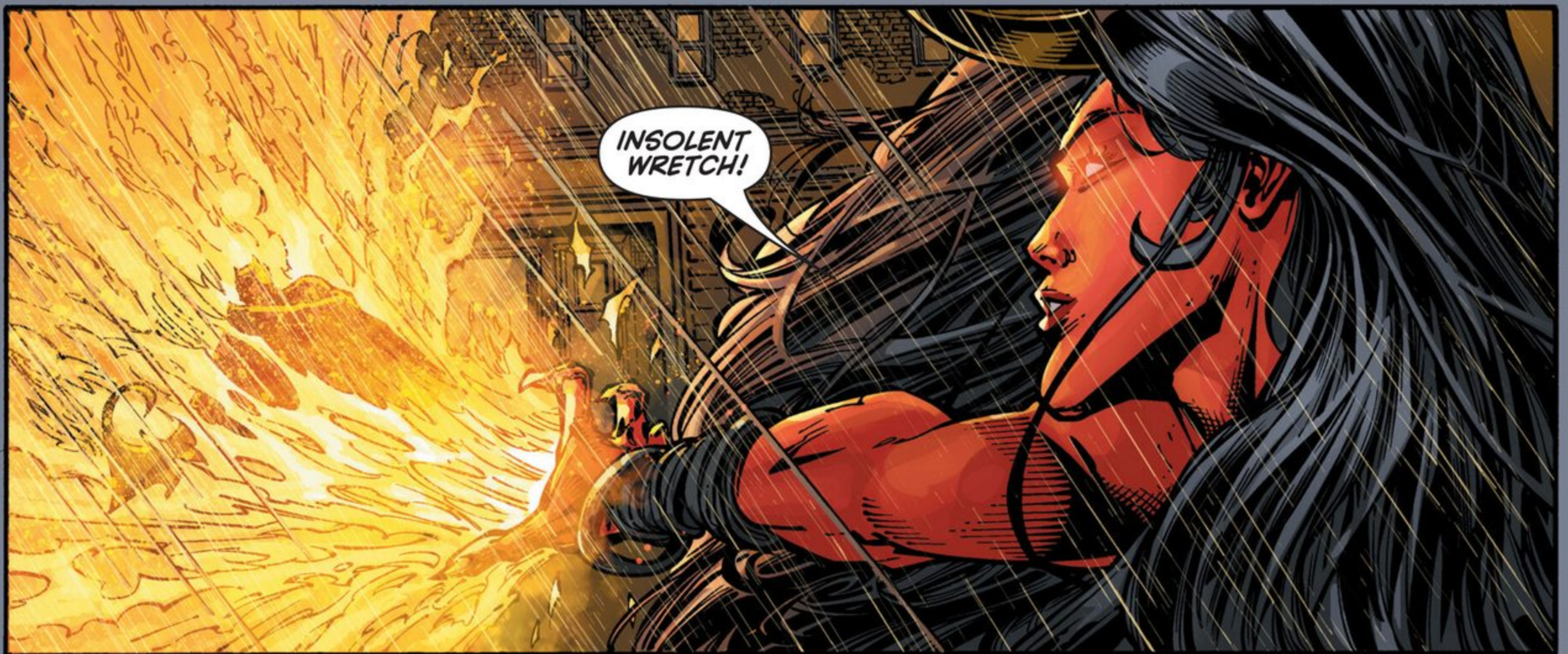


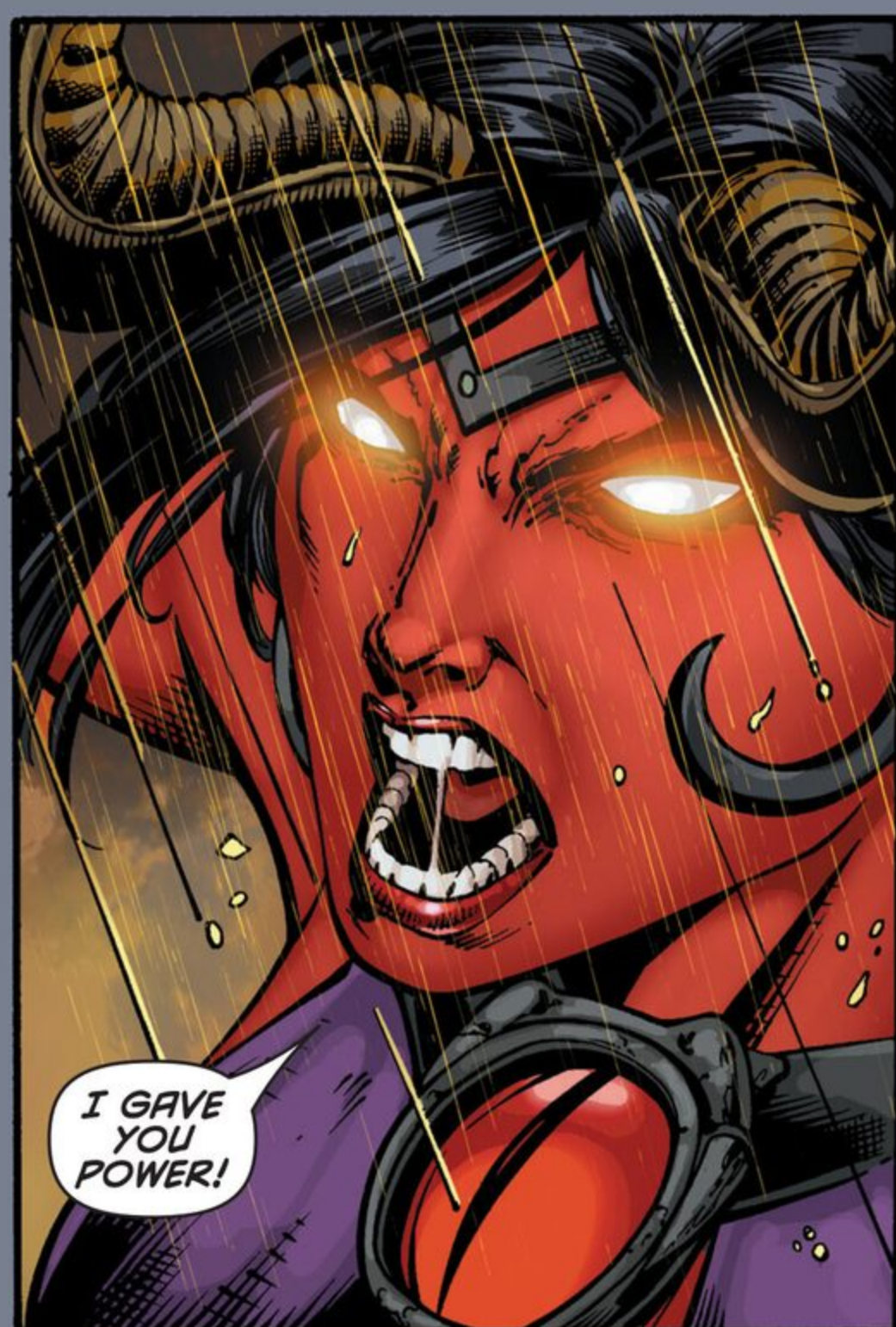
TNNK

KOOOM

ALL I SEE IS
SOMEONE FAMILIAR
FALLING. BUT YOU
DON'T KNOW HOW TO
STOP YOURSELF FROM
HITTING THE
GROUND.

AND
YOU NEVER
WILL UNLESS
YOU LEARN TO
THINK FOR
YOURSELF.







THIS CAN'T BE
HAPPENING...



OH, BUT
IT *IS* HAPPENING.
ALWAYS *WAS*.



I USED THE
RAGMAN'S BODY
AS A CONDUIT TO
THIS WORLD, BUT
I NO LONGER
HAVE USE FOR
HIM.

HELLO,
MY LITTLE
ONE.

DID
YOU MISS
DADDY?



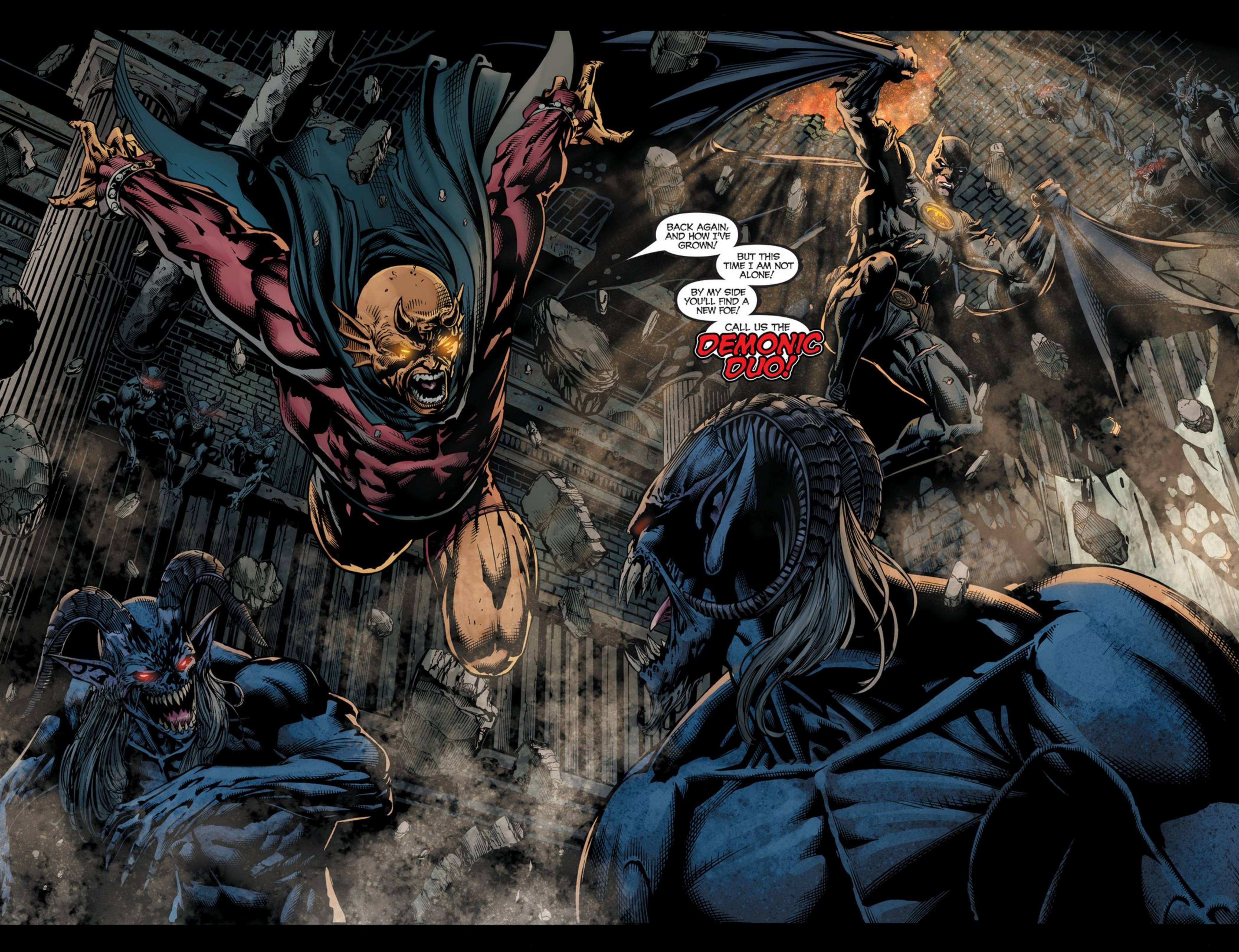


I HAVE BEEN
WITH YOU *ALWAYS*,
DEAREST. YOU WERE
EVER MY *FLESH*.

I
RAISED
YOU.

ALL FOR THIS
ONE EXQUISITE
MOMENT.

THAT YOU
MAY IN TURN
RAISE *ME*.



BACK AGAIN,
AND HOW I'VE
GROWN!

BUT THIS
TIME I AM NOT
ALONE!

BY MY SIDE
YOU'LL FIND A
NEW FOE!

CALL US THE
**DEMONIC
DUO!**





ETRIGAN!
NOW!

BATMAN,
THOUGH I SEE
AND HEAR...

THERE ARE
TOO MANY,
I FEAR.



THERE ARE
NEVER TOO
MANY!



POOR LITTLE
BAT...IS THAT ALL
YOU CAME HERE TO
SAY? TO TEACH AN
OLD DOG A *NEW*
TRICK?

TO MAKE
ETRIGAN THINK
HE COULD STAND
AGAINST THE
LIKES OF *ME*?



WELL, THEN,
YOU THINK
TOO...

...MUCH...



...NO...
ETRIGAN...YOU
DON'T HAVE THIS
KIND OF
POWER...





In my mind I see a big, beautiful kite. And it's floating away. And there's nothing I can do about it.

There's nothing I can ever do.



They all get blown away by the wind. Washed away by the rain.

All the ones I ever care for.



THE SPIRIT IS GONE, YOU MUST LET HER GO.

KNOW THAT YOU SAVED HER, EVEN SO.



A big, beautiful kite. And it's floating away. And there's nothing I can ever do.

But let it go.

EPILOGUE.

"DID YOU BRING THE SPECIFICATIONS OF THE *BATMAN'S VEHICLE*? CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY. YOUR FATHER'S LIFE DEPENDS UPON YOUR RESPONSE."

"I'M SORRY... I DID *NOT*."

"THEN TONIGHT YOUR FATHER WILL LOSE HIS HEAD..."

...AS HE BEGS FOR MERCY AT MY HAND, THINK ONLY THAT YOU COULD HAVE SAVED HIS LIFE, BUT INSTEAD, YOU *BETRAYED* HIM--

I HAVE SOMETHING *BETTER* INSTEAD, A DEVICE THAT FAR EXCEEDS YOUR EXPECTATIONS. AGAINST IT, THE BATMAN'S VEHICLE IS NOTHING.

WHAT IS IT?

A JAMMING DEVICE. WAYNE INDUSTRIES PERFECTED IT FOR THE BATMAN, HIMSELF. IT'S WHY EVEN THE FBI CAN NEVER TRACE HIS COMMUNICATIONS.

WHEN ACTIVATED IN THE VICINITY OF A SECURE COMPUTER, IT ALLOWS FREE COMMUNICATION WORLDWIDE, ENCRYPTED IN SUCH A WAY THAT NOT EVEN THE AMERICANS CAN BREAK THE CODES.

A WEAPON MAY KILL ONE MAN OR MANY. BUT THIS DEVICE GIVES YOU THE *WORLD*.

YOUR FATHER WILL BE SHOWN MERCY, GOD WILLING.

NOW GO.

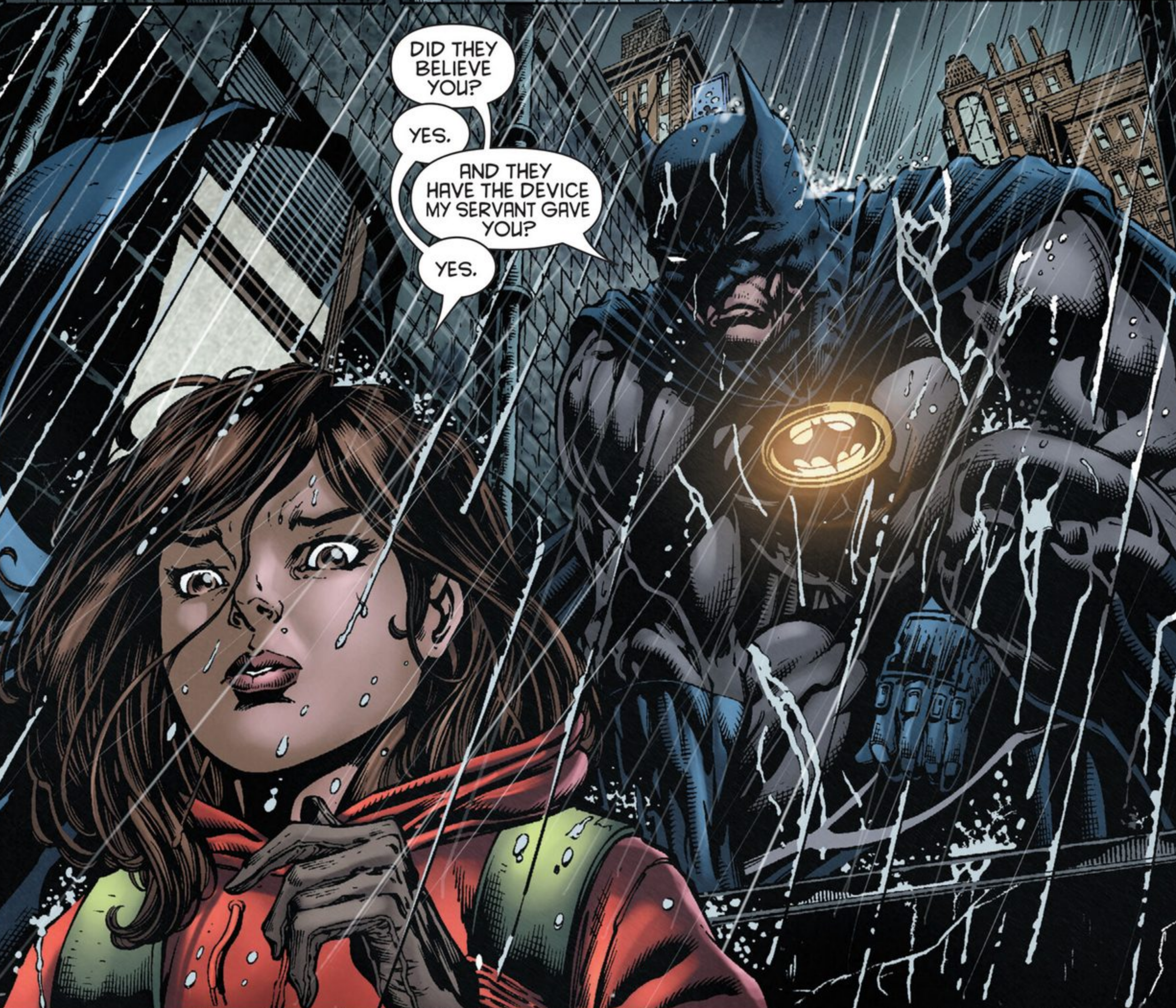


DID THEY
BELIEVE
YOU?

YES.

AND THEY
HAVE THE DEVICE
MY SERVANT GAVE
YOU?

YES.



THEN
THEY'RE
ABOUT TO
GET ME.

THE END...





BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT #1 variant cover
Art by **ANDY CLARKE**



BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT #2 variant cover
Art by **ANDY CLARKE** and **TOMEU MOREY**

BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT #3 variant cover
Art by ANDY CLARKE and TOMEU MOREY



BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT #4 variant cover
Art by DAVID FINCH







FINCH
2010
WILLIAMS
STEIGERWALD

BATMAN: THE RETURN
PLANET GOTHAM

GRANT MORRISON

Writer

DAVID FINCH

Penciller

BATT and RYAN WINN

Inkers

PETER STEIGERWALD

Colorist

DAVE SHARPE

Letterer

A large bat with orange wings is shown in flight against a large, pale yellow full moon. The bat's wings are spread wide, revealing a detailed pattern of veins. Its body is dark, and its eyes are glowing yellow. The background is a deep blue night sky.

Bats are common on the eastern seaboard of the United States of America, and those three that moon-minted night were no less conventional than the rest of their breed.

A little bigger, a little more aggressive tonight perhaps, but otherwise unremarkable.

*As insignificant in the great, great scheme of things as any other thing could **conceivably** be in any truly great scheme.*

This particular bat, on that particular night, was just a common creature at the end of his forty-year lifespan.



*As was the way of life in general,
he'd been aware more and more
often of others like him who were
younger, fiercer and more likely to
insist on the enforcement of strict
territorial boundaries.*

*As was also the way,
that night was inevitable.*



*That night was when
something bigger...*

Faster.

Smarter.

Younger.

Hungrier.



*Better
came
along.*

*But this
old bat...*

*This old bastard bat
was not yet ready to die.*

*Not there,
not then.*



With beating wings that felt weighed down by night-ages and moon-dirt, the old bat clambered into the dusk one last, heroic time.

It was a common creature, you'll recall, and its last desires were simple ones.



A safe cave to settle in.

A place to be alone.



A quiet perch to close its weary eyes.

These luxuries of a small, insignificant life.



But as our old bat searched for a cave to settle in, he was drawn instead to an odd, almost-familiar structure of stone and light and echoes with edges.

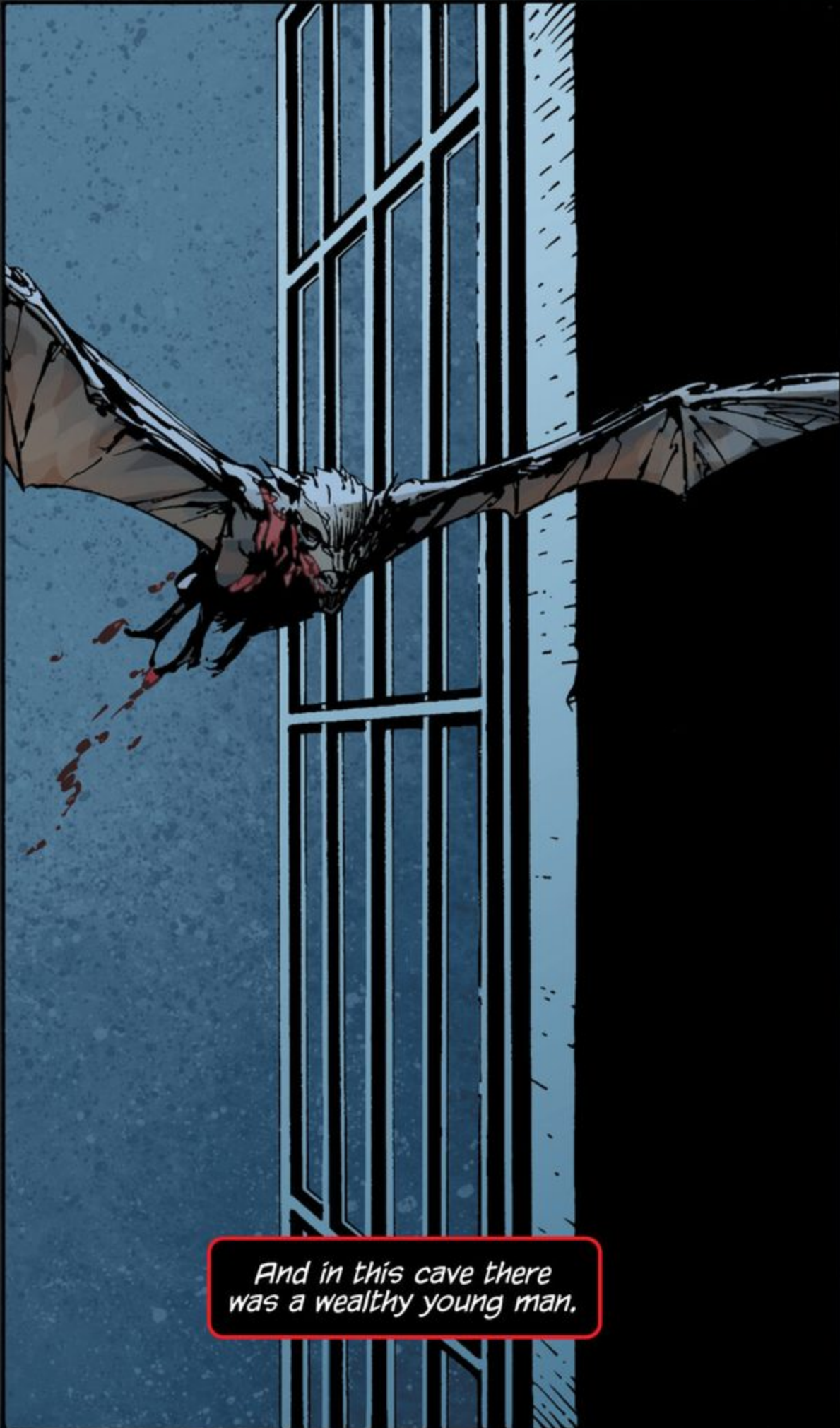
A new kind of cave.



In it was the sweet sound of glory and order and architecture.

It promised warm heaven of divine proportion.

A place where even the common could be accepted as sacred.



And in this cave there was a wealthy young man.



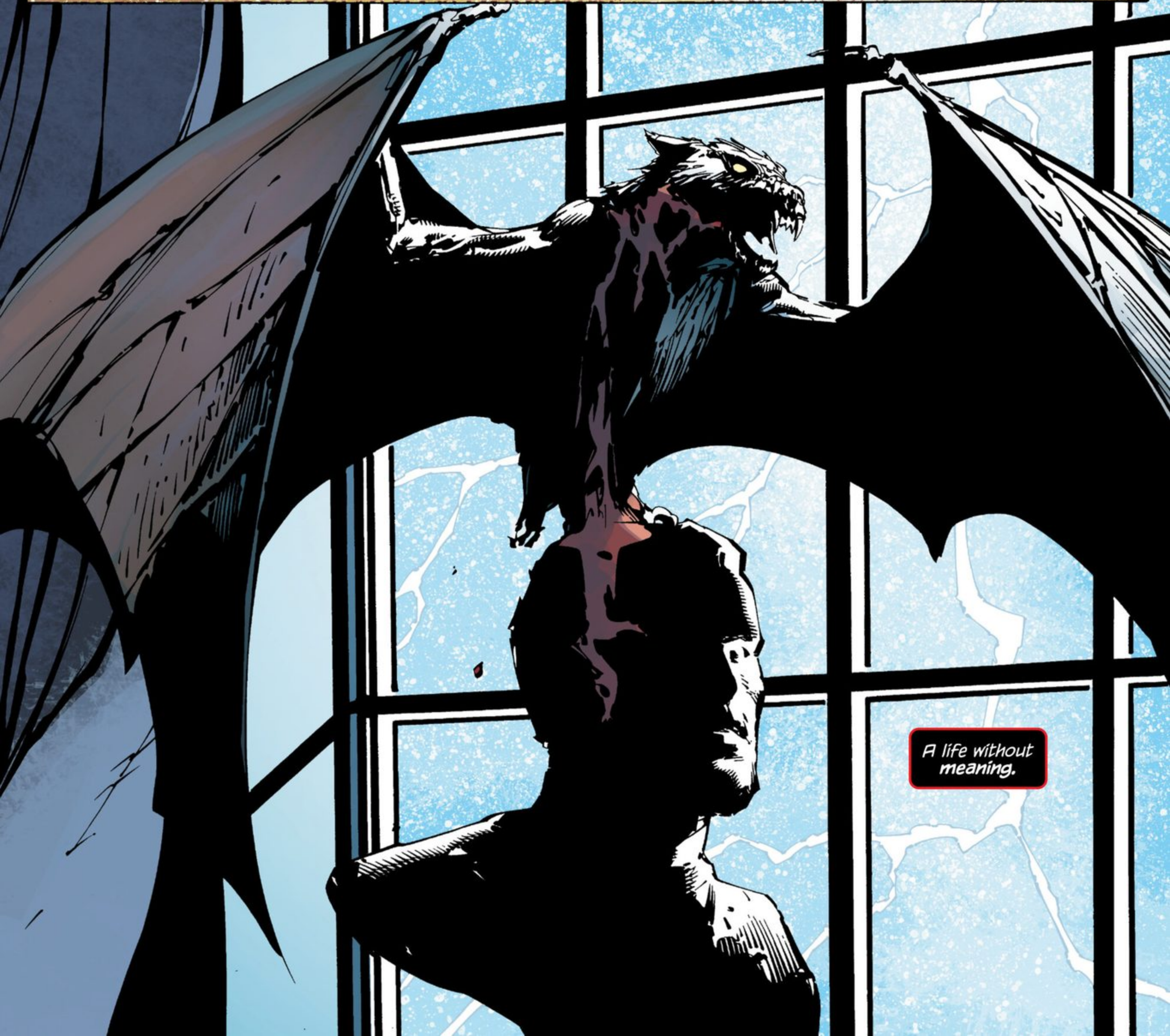
*His name was **Bruce Wayne** and
he was bleeding to death, hopeless,
with a bell in his hand.*



*A lost knight
without a standard.*

*A soldier with
a wounded heart.*

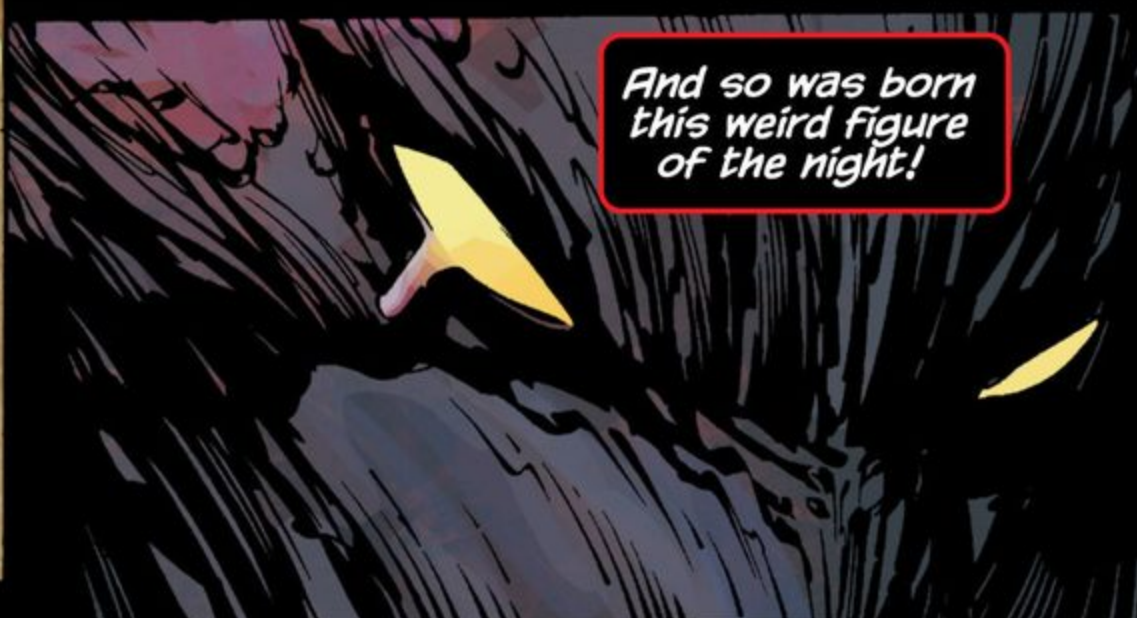
*A warrior
without a totem.*



*A life without
meaning.*



THAT'S
IT.



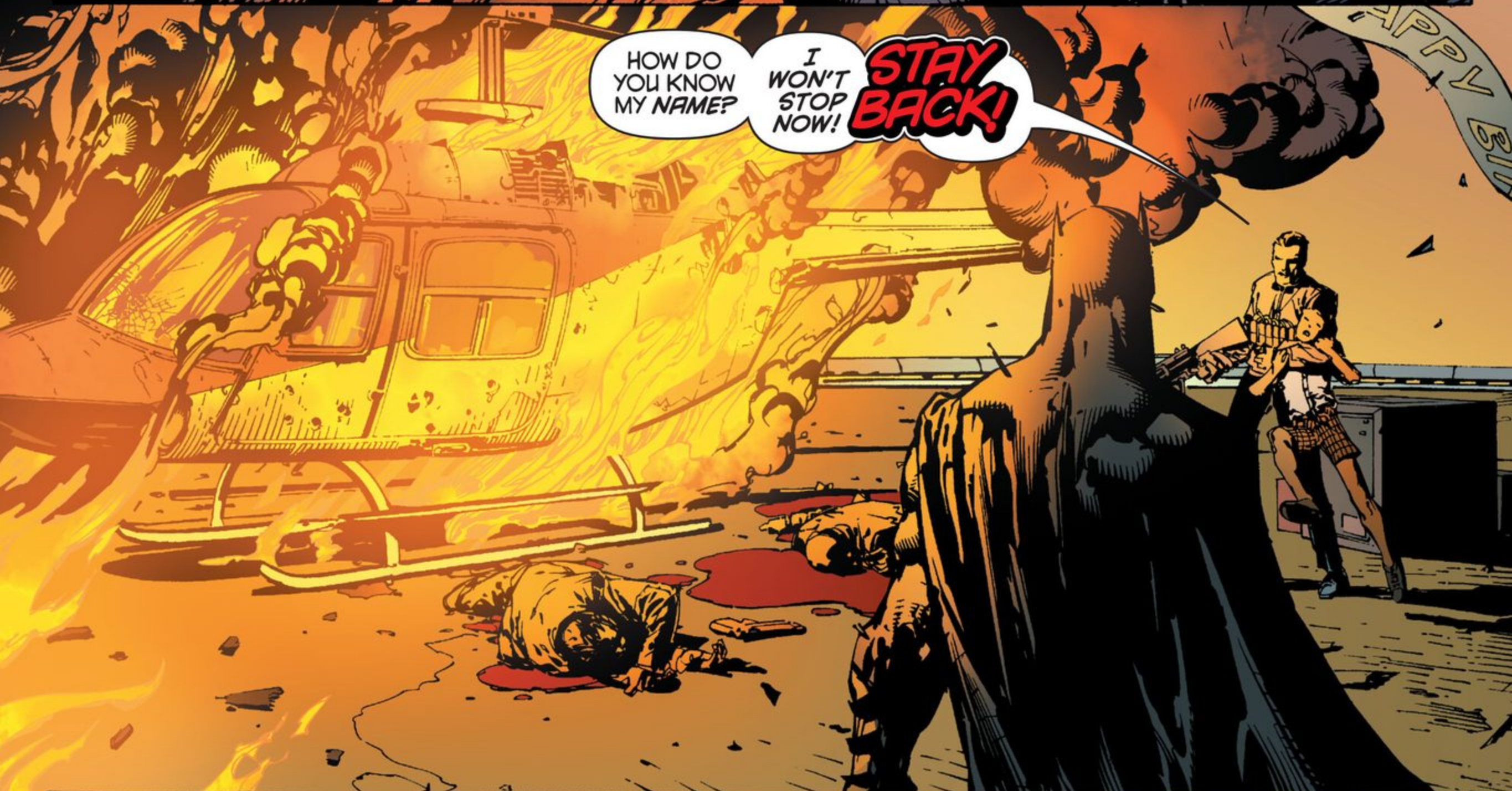
*And so was born
this weird figure
of the night!*





YOU DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE *ME* HERE, DID YOU?

THERE'S *STILL* TIME TO LET THE BOY GO, HUSSAIN MOHAMMED.



HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?

I WON'T STOP NOW!

STAY BACK!

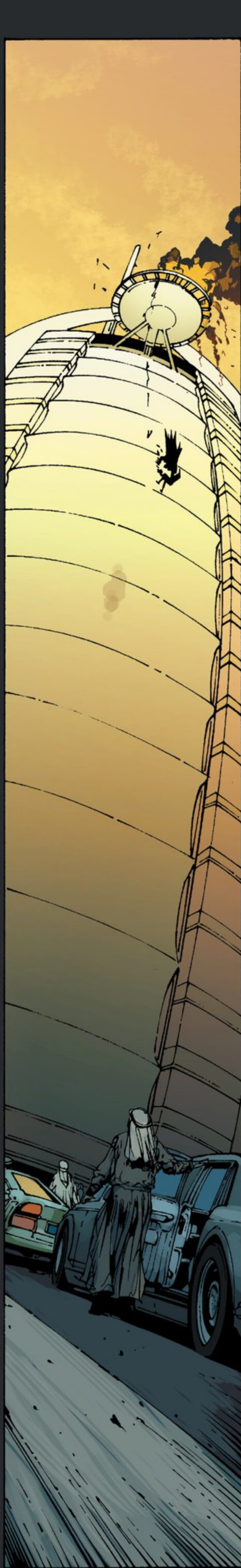


YOU DON'T KNOW *LEVIATHAN*.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY *DO* TO PEOPLE.

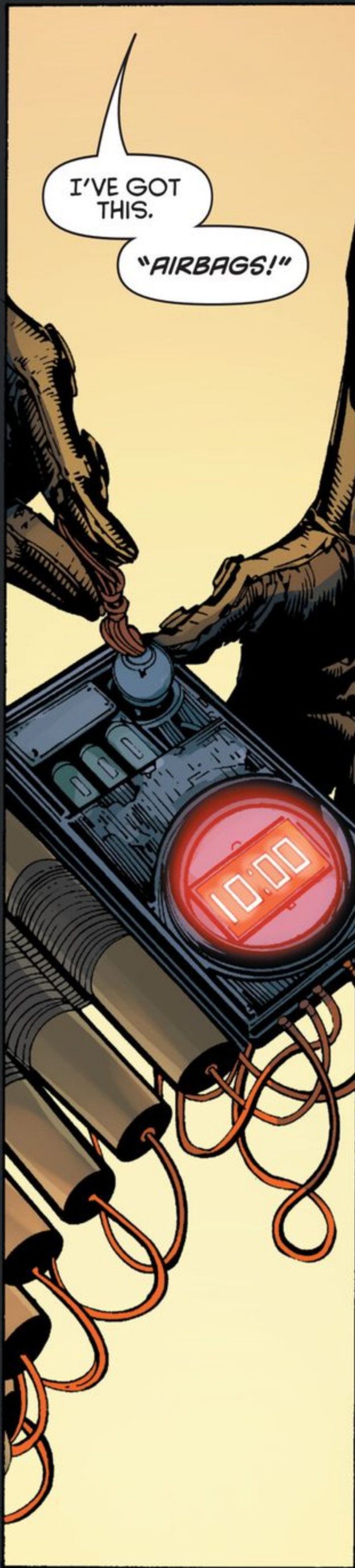
I'D RATHER DIE!



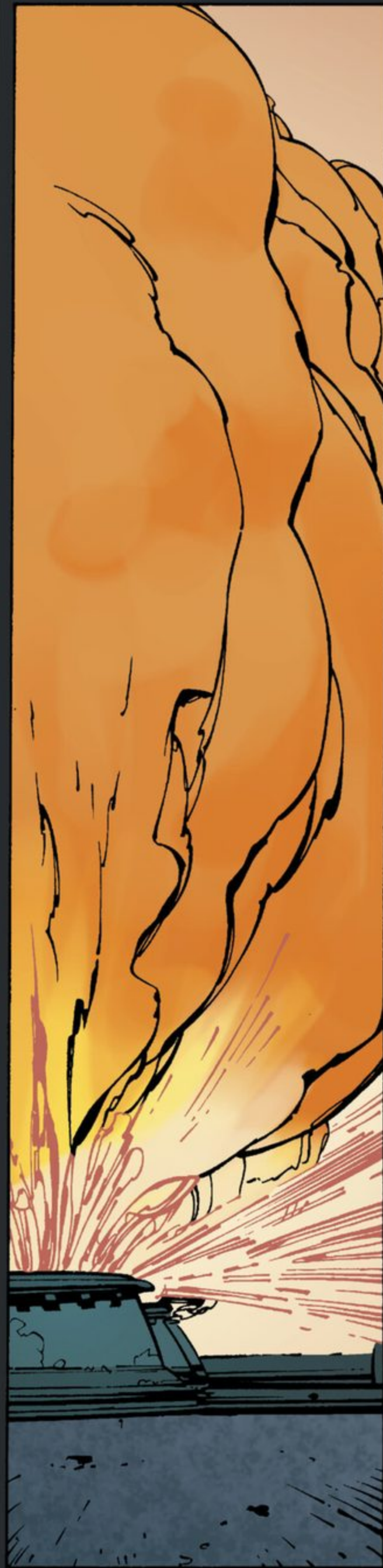
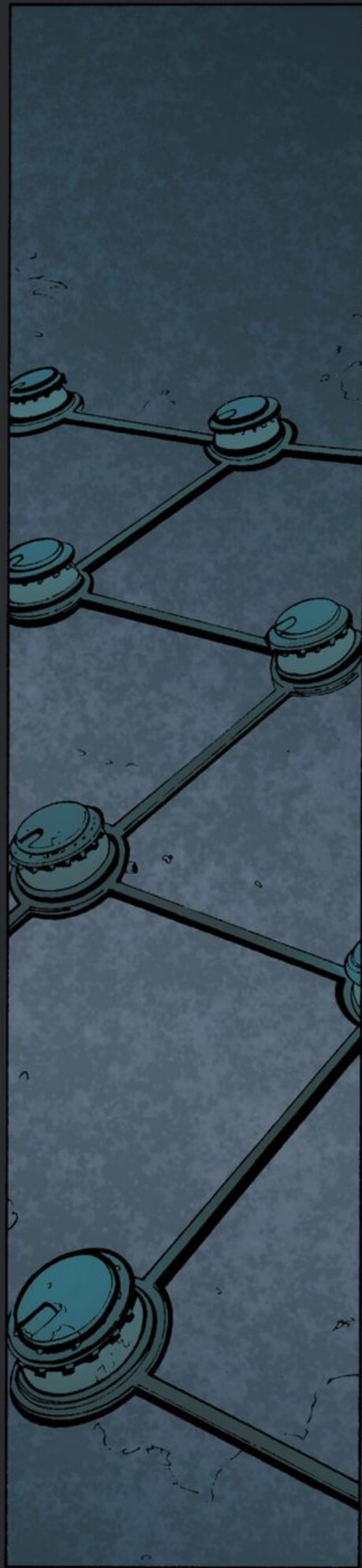




HANG
ON, KID.



I'VE GOT
THIS.
"AIRBAGS!"





TAKE MONEY... CARS...
...J-JEWELS...

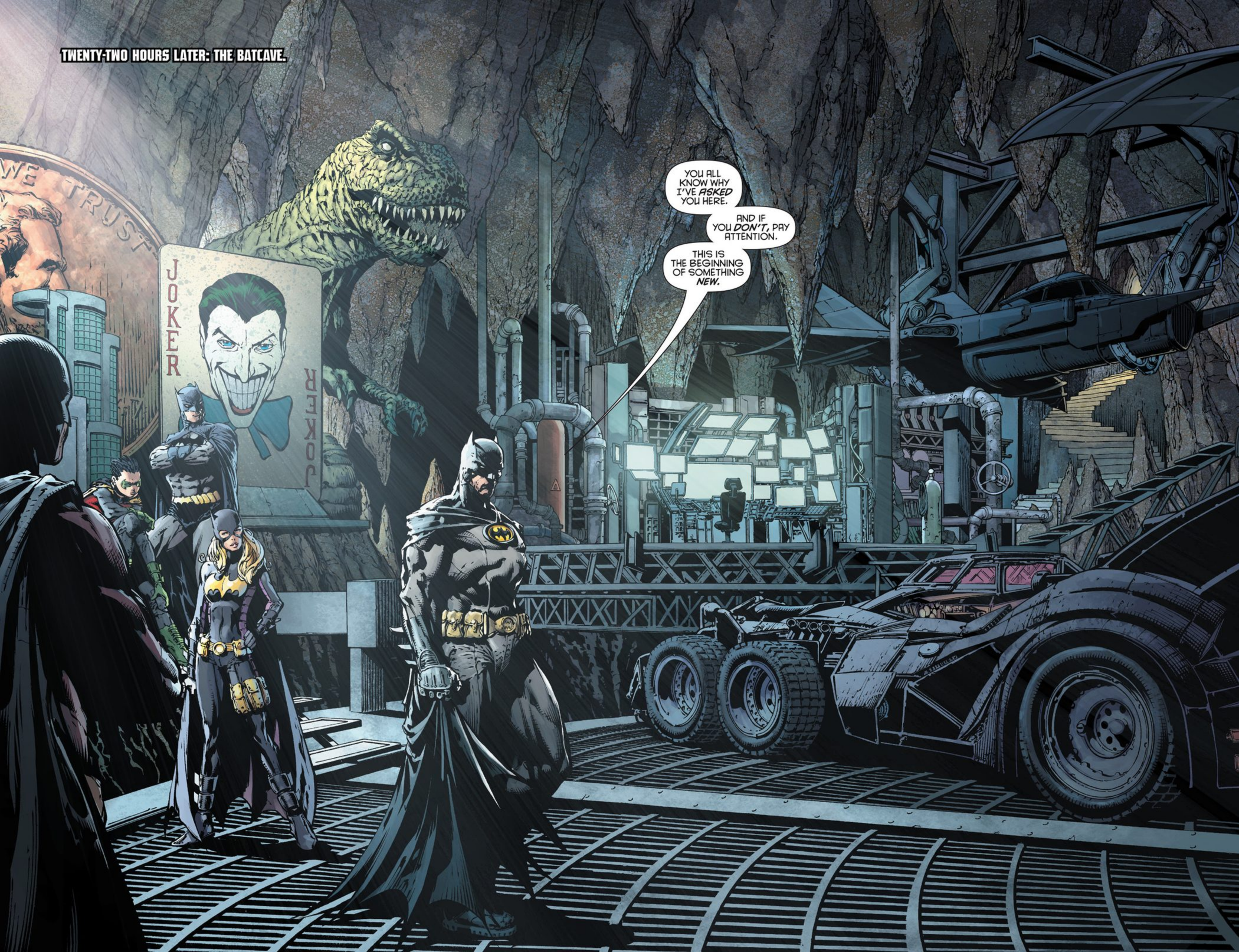


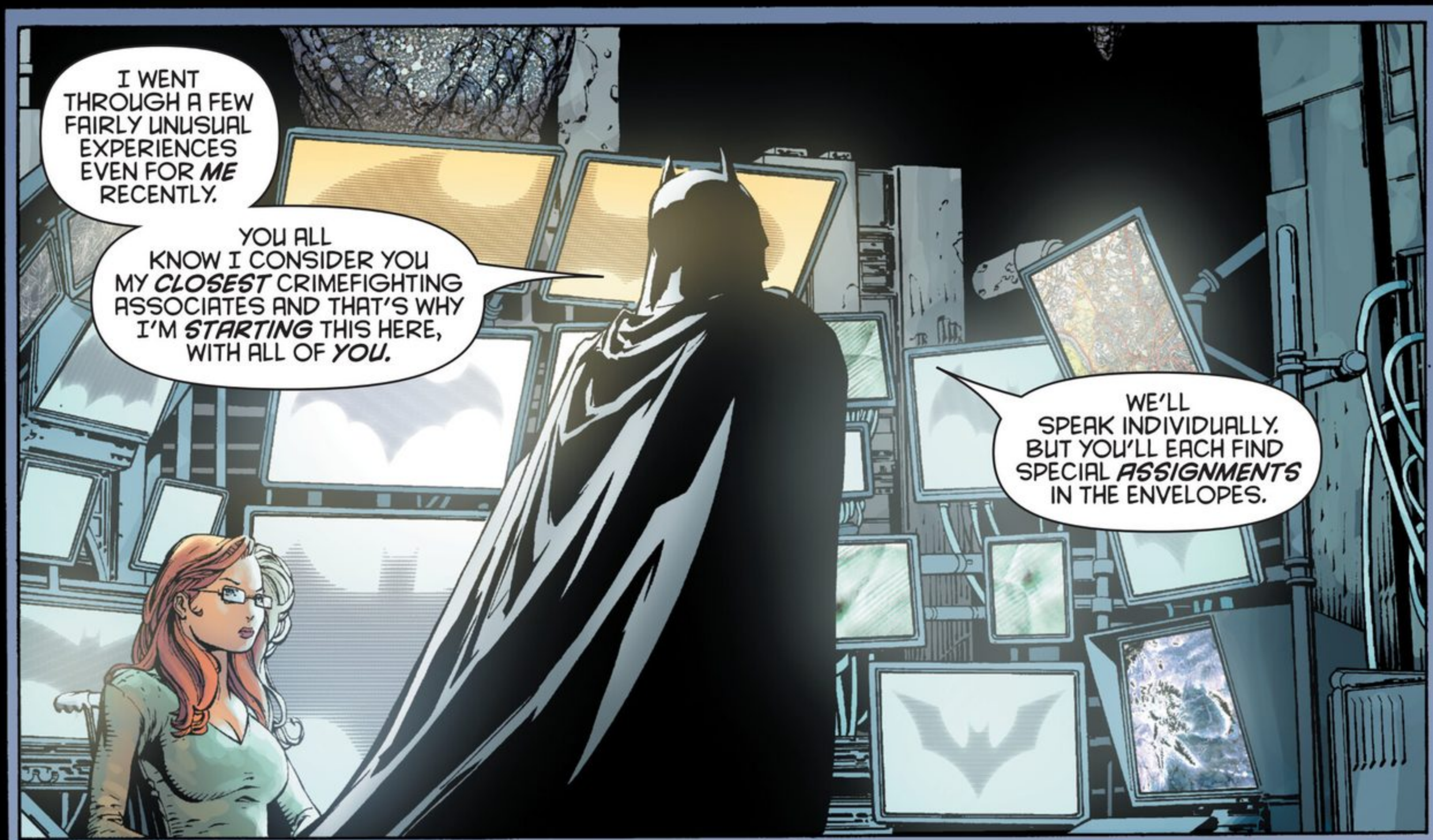
WHAT HUSSAIN KNOWS WILL DESTROY YOU.

AND I KNOW WHAT HUSSAIN KNOWS.



TWENTY-TWO HOURS LATER: THE BATCAVE.





I WENT THROUGH A FEW FAIRLY UNUSUAL EXPERIENCES EVEN FOR *ME* RECENTLY.

YOU ALL KNOW I CONSIDER YOU MY *CLOSEST* CRIMEFIGHTING ASSOCIATES AND THAT'S WHY I'M *STARTING* THIS HERE, WITH ALL OF *YOU*.

WE'LL SPEAK INDIVIDUALLY, BUT YOU'LL EACH FIND SPECIAL *ASSIGNMENTS* IN THE ENVELOPES.



STARTING TODAY, WE FIGHT *IDEAS* WITH *BETTER IDEAS*.

THE IDEA OF *CRIME* WITH THE IDEA OF *BATMAN*.

FROM *TODAY* ON, BATMAN WILL BE EVERYWHERE IT'S *DARK*, NO PLACE TO *HIDE*.



YOUR RESPIRATION IS *FASTER* AND SHALLOWER.

YOU SEEM UNNATURALLY *FOCUSED* ON THIS WHOLE PRESENTATION.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE *OKAY* AFTER WHAT HAPPENED, BRUCE?

NEVER BETTER, BARBARA.

IN *SPRING* NEXT YEAR, WAYNETECH IS ANNOUNCING INTERNET 3.0.

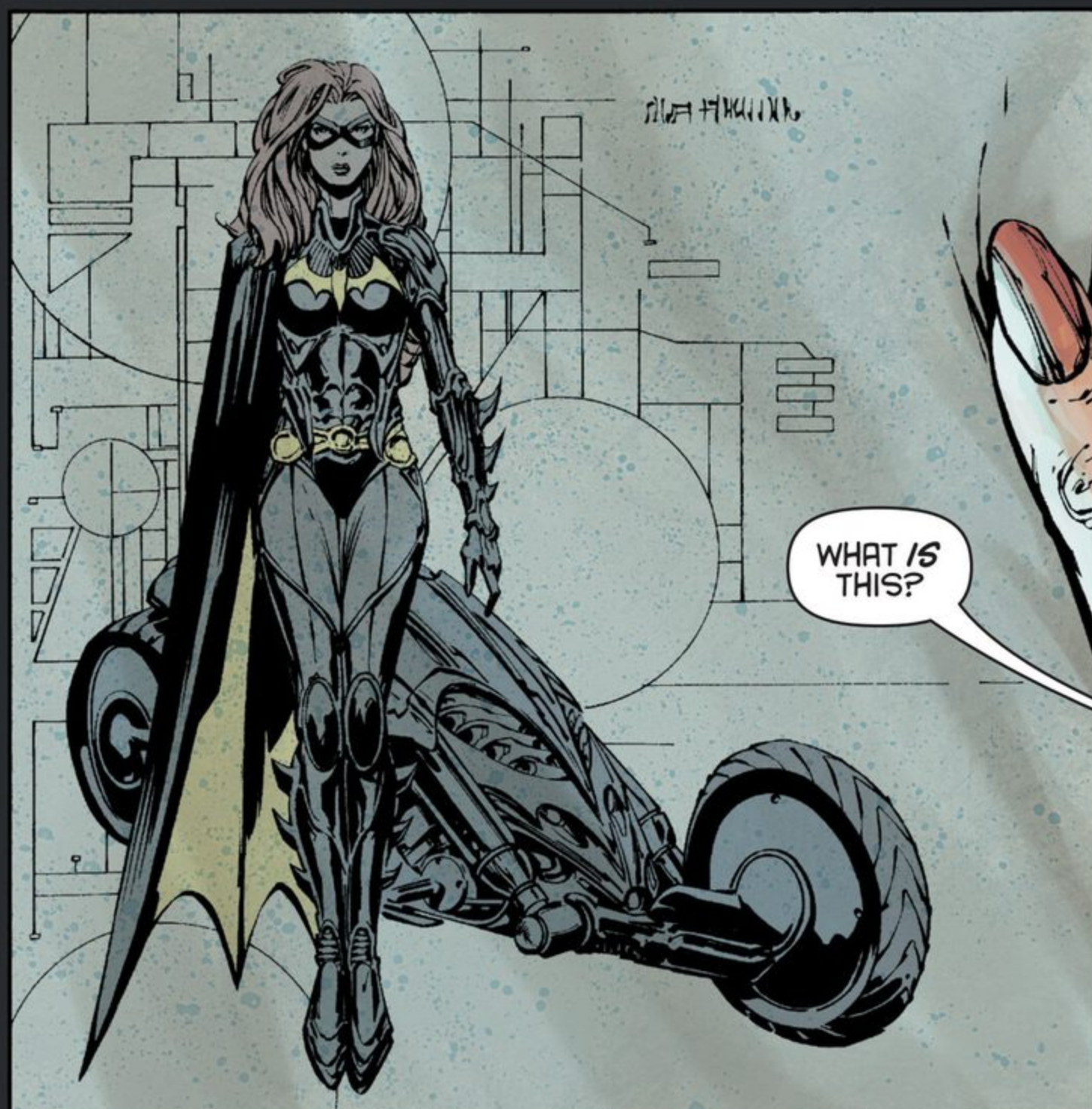


I WANT *YOU* TO BE MY *GHOST IN THE MACHINE*.

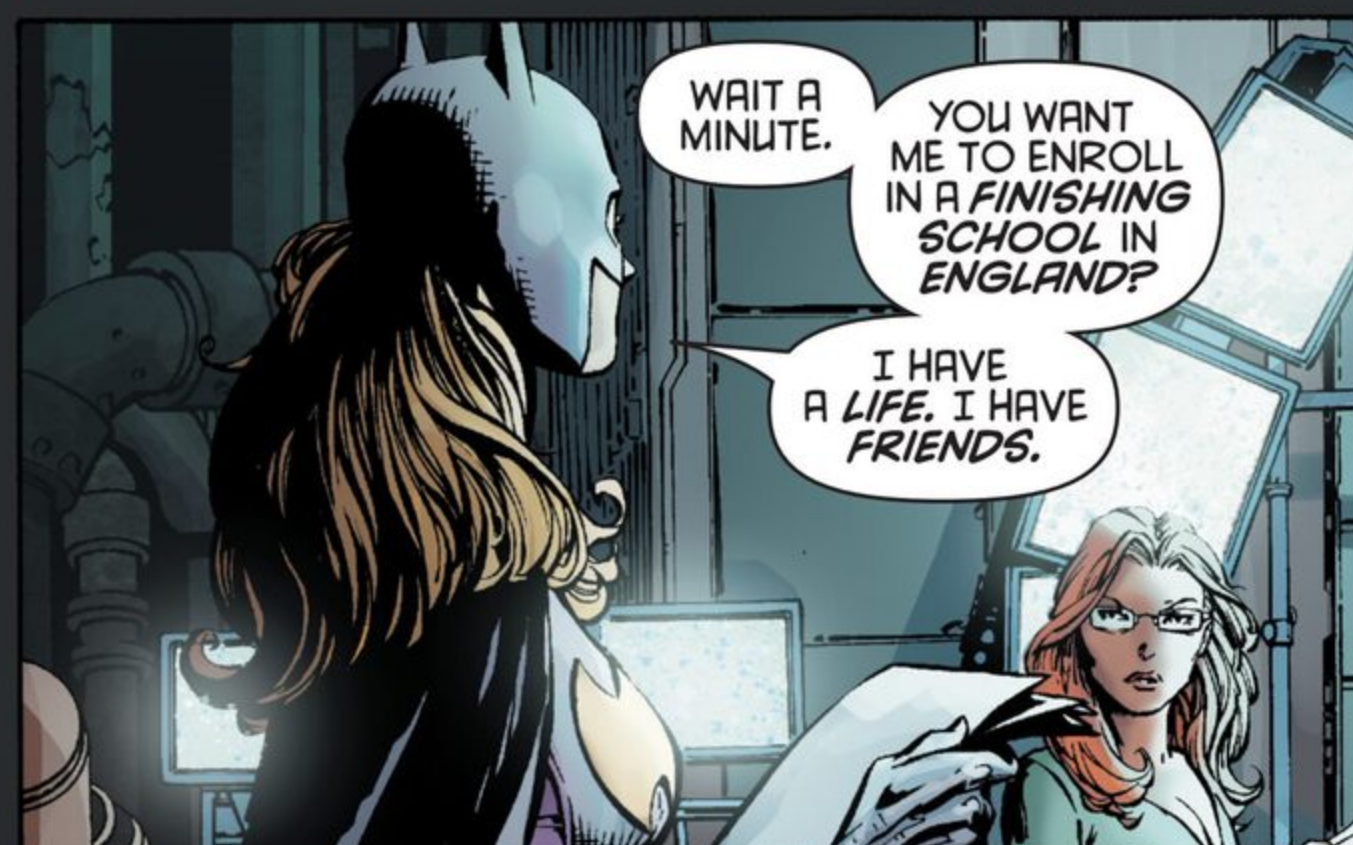
YOU'LL HAVE ACCESS TO *CHEAT CODES*, VEHICLES AND WEAPONS NO ONE ELSE HAS.

OH, AND FEEL FREE TO CUSTOMIZE YOUR *AVATAR*-- DESIGN DIVISION...

INTERNET 3.0?



WHAT *IS* THIS?



WAIT A MINUTE.

YOU WANT ME TO ENROLL IN A *FINISHING SCHOOL* IN ENGLAND?

I HAVE A *LIFE*. I HAVE *FRIENDS*.



NEVER MIND *THAT*.

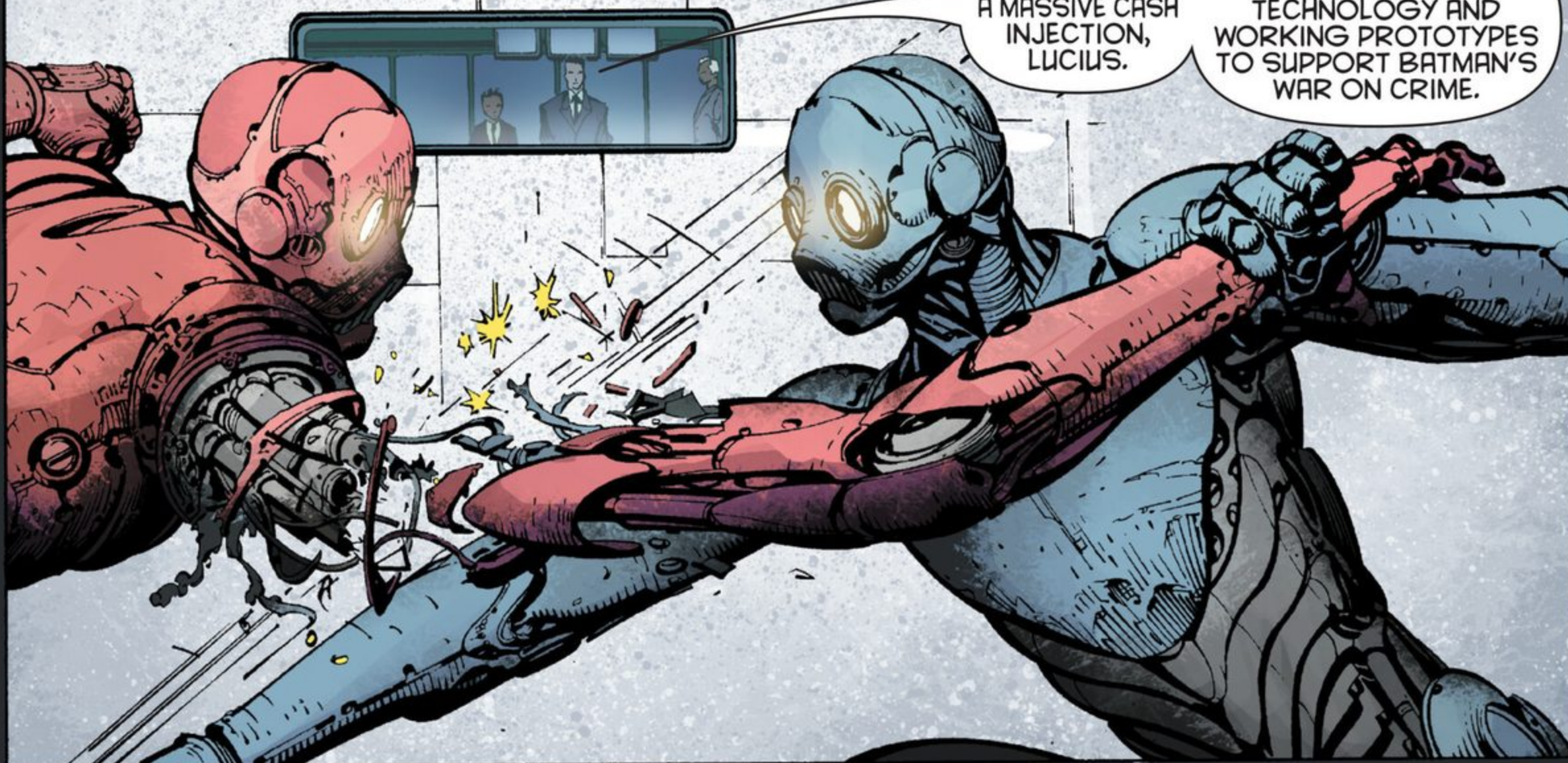
WHAT ABOUT *US*?

WHAT ABOUT *BATMAN AND ROBIN*?

TWO HOURS LATER: WAYNETECH R&D.

...I'M
AUTHORIZING
A MASSIVE CASH
INJECTION,
LUCIUS.

WE'RE INVESTING
IN BLEEDING EDGE
TECHNOLOGY AND
WORKING PROTOTYPES
TO SUPPORT BATMAN'S
WAR ON CRIME.



TTT

MY PLEASURE,
MR. WAYNE.

THAT'S
WHY WE'RE
HERE.

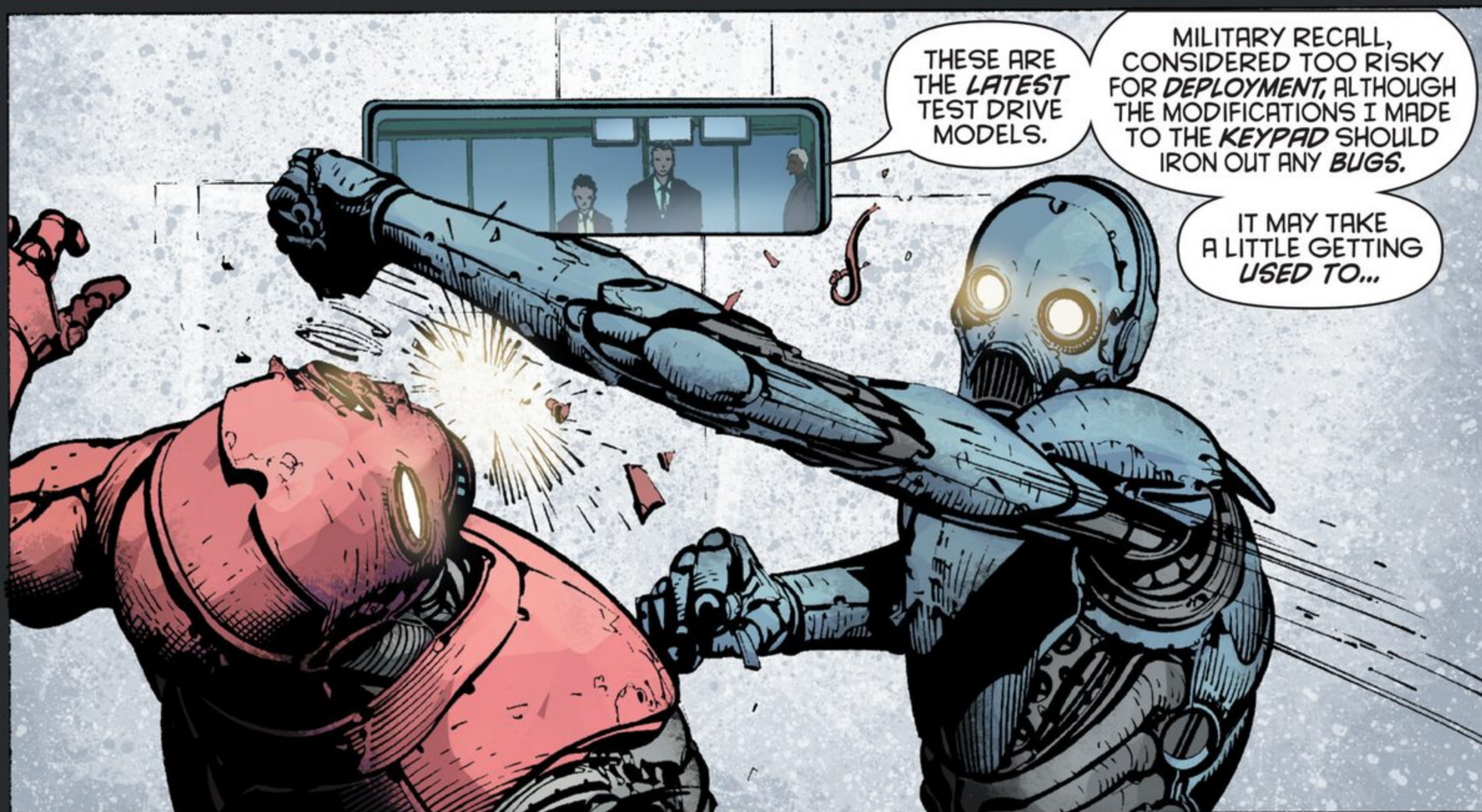
IT'S GOOD
TO HAVE YOU
BACK TO YOUR
OLD SELF.



THESE ARE
THE *LATEST*
TEST DRIVE
MODELS.

MILITARY RECALL,
CONSIDERED TOO RISKY
FOR *DEPLOYMENT*, ALTHOUGH
THE MODIFICATIONS I MADE
TO THE *KEYPAD* SHOULD
IRON OUT ANY *BUGS*.

IT MAY TAKE
A LITTLE GETTING
USED TO...



HH

THE *G.I. ROBOT*
PROGRAM.
RECALLED AFTER THEY
RAN *ROGUE*.

I NEED A
THOUSAND BY
SPRING.

SOMETHING
TOLD ME YOU'D
SAY *SOMETHING*
LIKE THAT.

IT OCCURRED
TO ME THAT YOUR
FRIEND *BATMAN* MIGHT
BE *VERY* INTERESTED
IN THE POTENTIAL OF
REMOTE-CONTROLLED
SOLDIERS.





I
COULDN'T
AGREE
MORE.



WHAT *ELSE*
HAVE YOU GOT
FOR ME?

RIGHT THIS
WAY, MISTER
WAYNE.



...JET-SUITS
INCREASE HUMAN
STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE
AS WELL AS PROVIDING
SHORT-RANGE FLIGHT
CAPABILITY.

AGAIN,
CONSIDERED TOO
COSTLY AND TOO
RISKY FOR
OPERATIONAL
USE.

ALTHOUGH
I CAN SEE
SEVERAL WAYS
TO FIX THAT...

INTERESTING.

HOW QUICKLY
CAN YOU MODIFY
TWO OF THESE?



A DAY? *TWELVE*
HOURS.

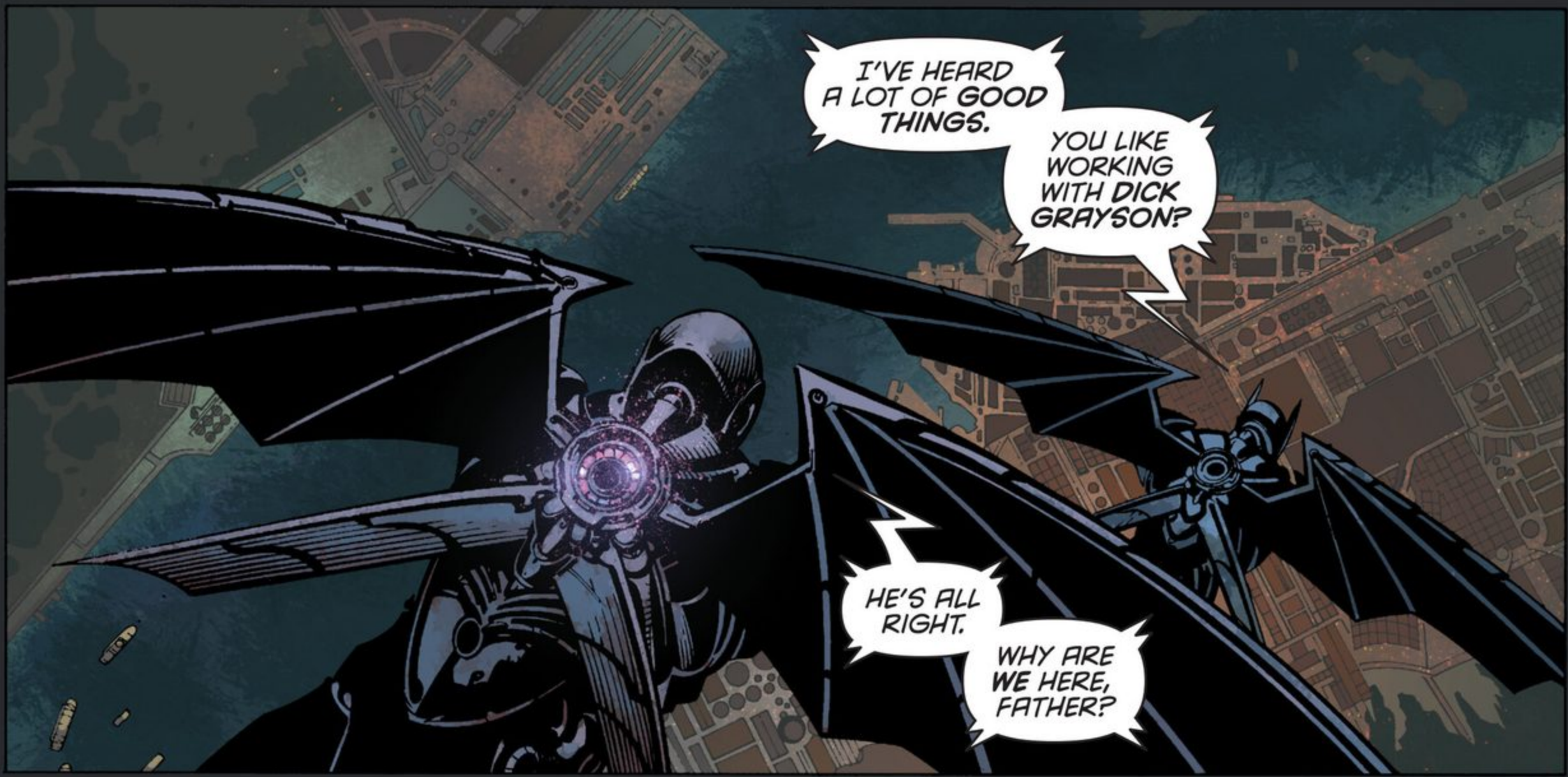
IN *BLACK*,
I TAKE IT.

GO
WILD.

WE WANT
THEM TO LOOK
LIKE *BATMAN AND*
ROBIN, LUCIUS.



THIRTY HOURS LATER: YEMEN.



I'VE HEARD
A LOT OF GOOD
THINGS.

YOU LIKE
WORKING
WITH DICK
GRAYSON?

HE'S ALL
RIGHT.

WHY ARE
WE HERE,
FATHER?



AM I ON
TRIAL IN SOME
WAY?

HUSSAIN
MOHAMMED CLAIMED
HIS BROTHER HAD BEEN
KIDNAPPED AND
OPERATED ON...

...I DISCOVERED
SHEIKH FAROUK WAS
FINANCING ILLEGAL
BIO-EXPERIMENTS
RIGHT HERE.

DIRTY
ENHANCEMENTS.
METAGENE
BOOSTERS,
SYNTHETIC
SUPERPOWERS.



WHAT ARE THEY?

SURGICALLY ENGINEERED SUPERHUMAN BODYGUARDS--ALL THE RAGE AMONG THE MEGA-WEALTHY. ASK YOUR MOTHER.

THESE LOOK LIKE FAILED EXPERIMENTS.

CANNON FODDER.



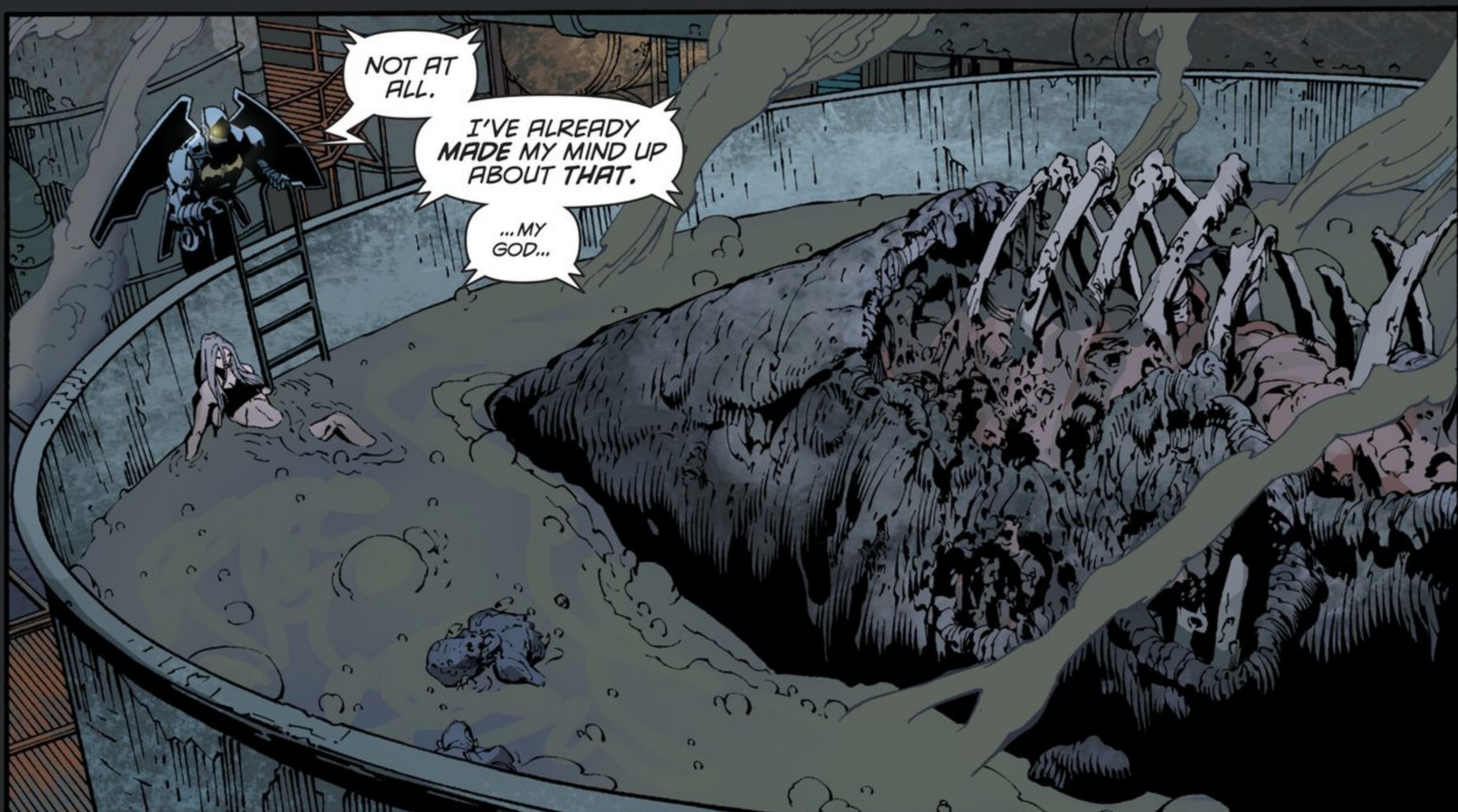
THE RUMOR IS THEY WERE WORKING ON A BIG SECRET PROJECT FOR A MYSTERY CLIENT.

AN ALPHA MODEL DESIGNER SUPERHUMAN.

STAY ALERT.

YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED MY QUESTION.

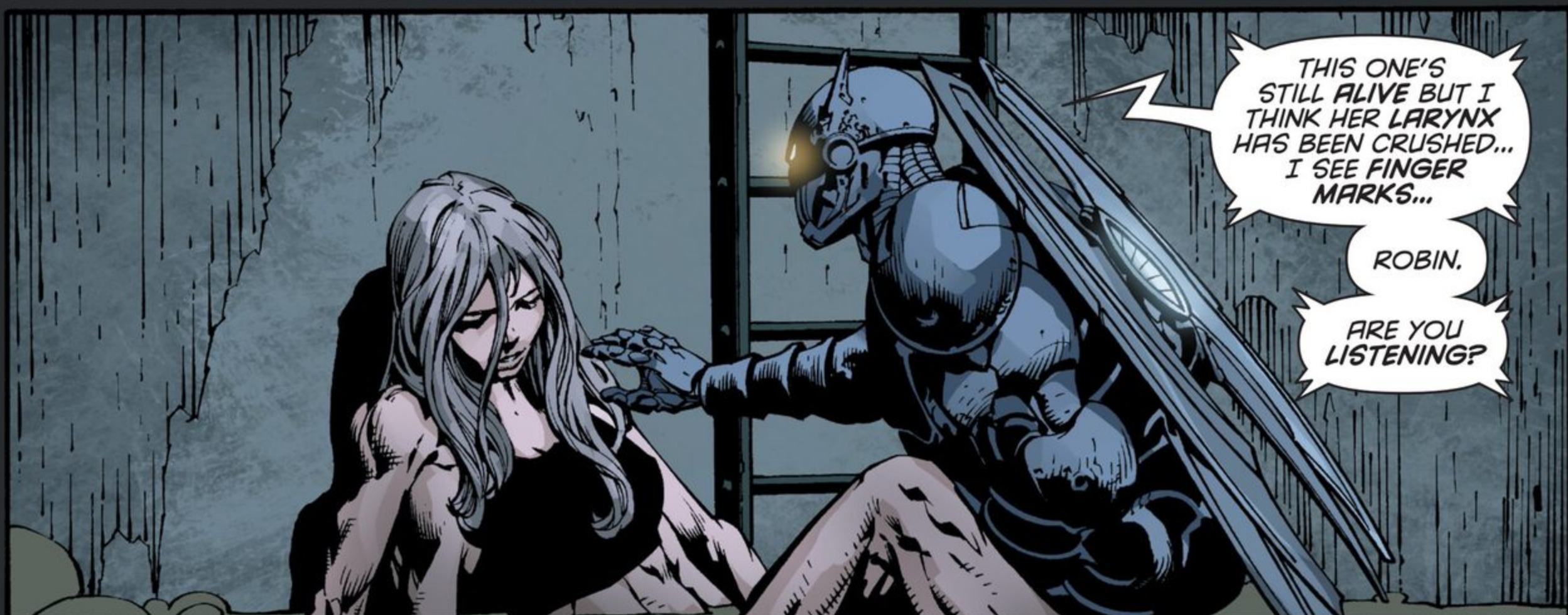
WAS I RIGHT TO ASSUME THIS MISSION WAS SOME KIND OF TEST OF MY CONTINUED SUITABILITY AS ROBIN?



NOT AT ALL.

I'VE ALREADY MADE MY MIND UP ABOUT THAT.

...MY GOD...



THIS ONE'S STILL ALIVE BUT I THINK HER LARYNX HAS BEEN CRUSHED... I SEE FINGER MARKS...

ROBIN.

ARE YOU LISTENING?



VAMPIRE
MAN!



TRAKTIR
OF THE SUPER-
COLLECTIVE IS
HERE!

LEAVE
HER BE
OR DIE!



URHHH...
IT STINKS
DOWN
THERE!

YOU
SURELY DON'T
NEED ME FOR
THIS.

TARGETING
LASERS.

STAY CLOSE
BY THE WOMAN, HE
WON'T SHOOT!

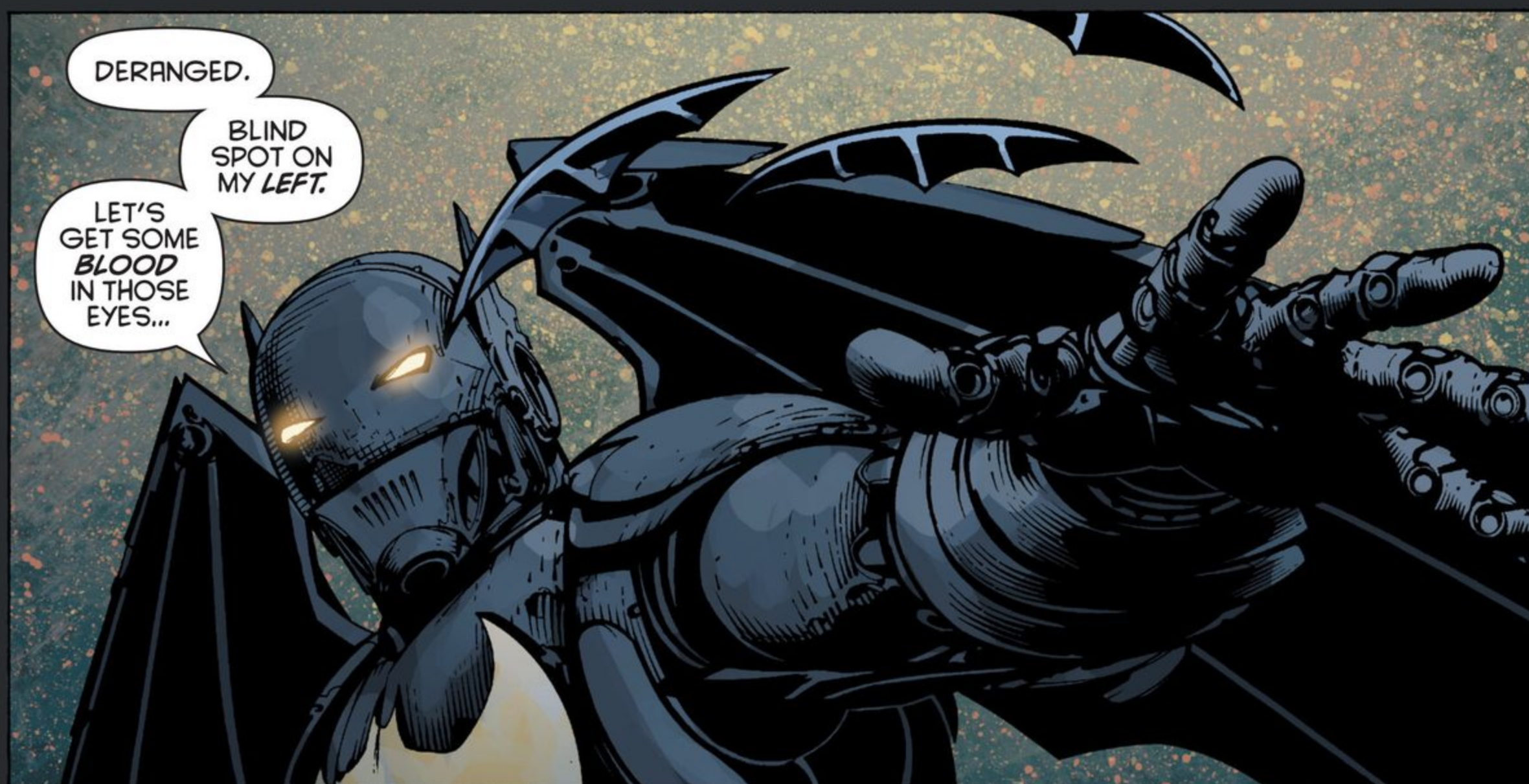


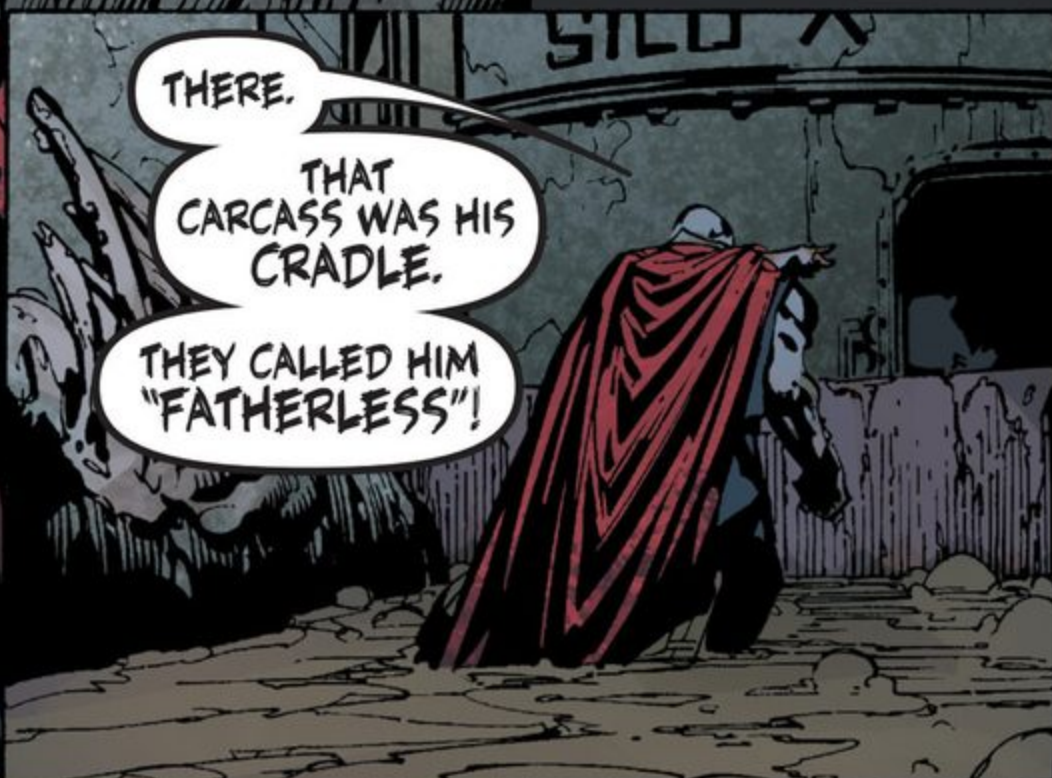
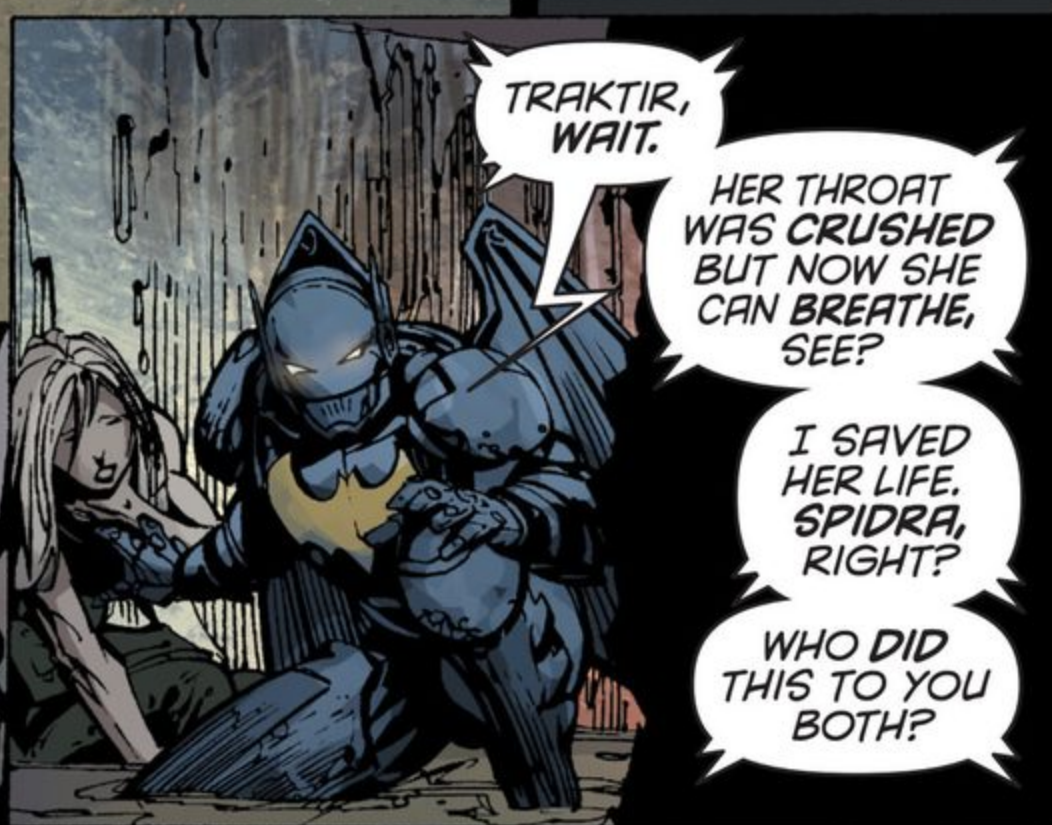
TRAKTIR
IS LAST HERO
STANDING!

I LOST MY
COMPANIONS! MY
WORLD IN FINAL
CONFLICT WITH THE
HERETIC!

I WILL NOT
LOSE MY LAST
LOVE!

MY SWEET
SPIDRA!







ROBIN!

I...I KNOW
YOU...BUT...

...THAT DAY
HAS YET TO
COME,

WHEN IT
DOES...



...YOU WILL
KNOW ME.

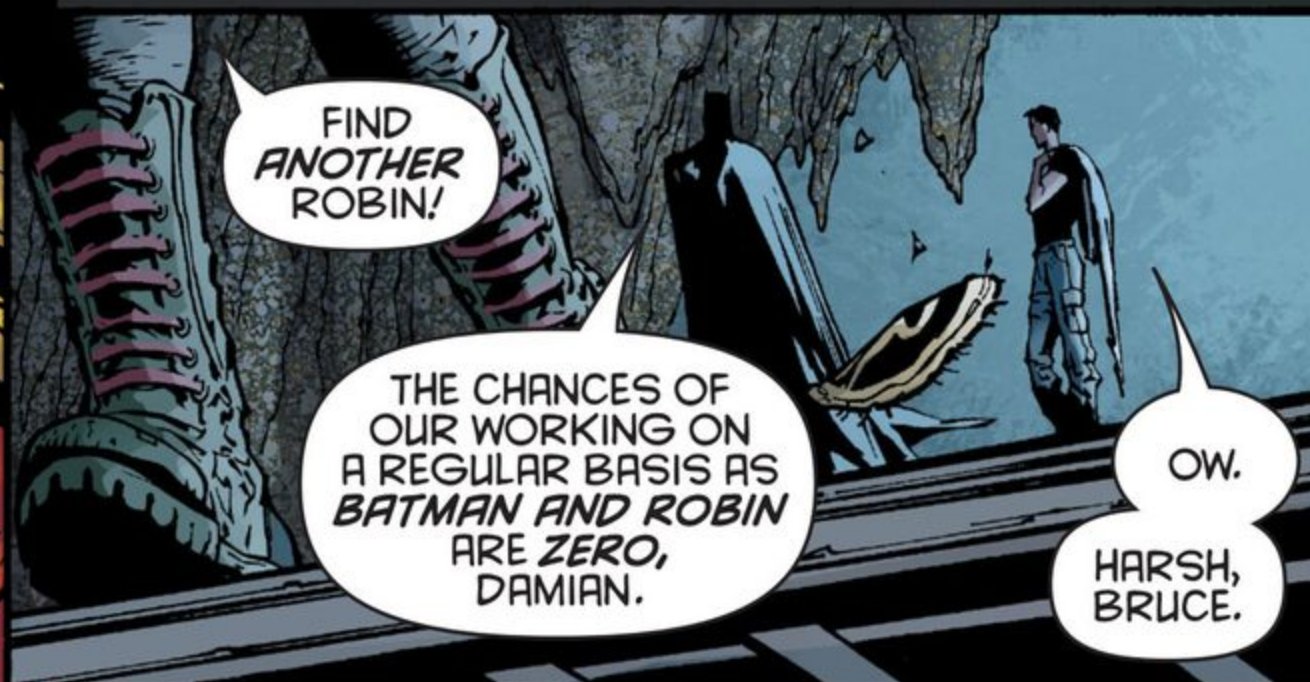






THAT'S IT!

I DIDN'T COME HERE TO BE *PATRONIZED* OR JUDGED ON MY "PERFORMANCE."



FIND *ANOTHER* ROBIN!

THE CHANCES OF OUR WORKING ON A REGULAR BASIS AS *BATMAN AND ROBIN* ARE *ZERO*, DAMIAN.

OW.

HARSH, BRUCE.

I NEED A PARTNER WHO CAN STAY FOCUSED AND KEEP UP.

BRUCE, COME ON! I MADE A *CAREER* OUT OF NOT DOING ANYTHING I WAS TOLD WHEN I WAS ROBIN.

HE GAVE UP *EVERYTHING* FOR THIS.

YOU CAN'T JUST TAKE IT *AWAY*.



WHAT MADE YOU THINK I'D DO *THAT*?

I'VE *SEEN* WHAT YOU'RE CAPABLE OF TOGETHER.

ALFRED, JIM GORDON... THEY *LOVE* YOU.



YEAH, WELL... YOU SHOULD *SMILE* MORE.

WHATEVER'S GOING ON BEHIND ALL THIS...

...YOU *CAN'T* CUT HIM OUT.



WHY WOULD I?

I *AM* STILL HERE. YOU *CAN* TALK DIRECTLY TO ME.

I WANT YOU BOTH TO STAY *TOGETHER*, AS BATMAN AND ROBIN, HERE IN *GOTHAM CITY*.

LIKE YOU SAID, DAMIAN, "WE NEED *ALL* THE BATMEN WE CAN GET."



"BATMAN, INCORPORATED."

BRUCE, LOOK, I DID WHAT I COULD TO FILL IN, BUT THERE'S ONLY *ONE* BATMAN AND WE *KNOW* IT...



NO... NOT *THIS* TIME.

THIS TIME IT'S *BIGGER* THAN THAT.

I NEED YOU... *GOTHAM* NEEDS YOU.

THE *WORLD* NEEDS *US*.



OKAY.

THIS IS... BRUCE... *WOW*.

WHAT DO YOU *SAY*, ROBIN?



YOU MADE THE *RIGHT DECISION*, FATHER.

NOW. PERHAPS NOW YOU'LL *WANT* TO KNOW ABOUT THE *BUG* I MANAGED TO PLANT WHEN I "DISOBEYED ORDERS."



...I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW MUCH THE BOY'S *CHANGED*...

SHE CAN'T BE HAPPY.

NEVERTHELESS, GOTHAM CITY IS IN *VERY* CAPABLE HANDS, SIR.

ALTHOUGH...

THERE'S A LOT YOU'VE NOT *TOLD* THEM YET, ISN'T THERE?

I HAVE TO *PROTECT* THEM FROM WHAT'S COMING... WHAT I SAW...

TOKYO. HOW DOES *TOKYO* SOUND FIRST, ALFRED?

THEN MAYBE *ARGENTINA*.



WE HAVE PROPERTIES ALL AROUND THE *WORLD*, MASTER BRUCE.

YOU RARELY *VISIT* THEM, BUT THEY *ARE* REGULARLY MAINTAINED.

I--

GOOD.

WE NEED MORE *BATCAVES*.



I'LL SEE TO IT *RIGHT AWAY*, SIR.

AND I'LL KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS THIS END, DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT THAT.

THOSE YOUNG MEN WON'T LET YOU DOWN.

I *KNOW*... BUT THEY'RE ONLY THE START OF AN *ARMY AGAINST CRIME*...

IT FEELS GOOD TO BE *BACK*, OLD FRIEND.

AT THE *BEGINNING* OF SOMETHING AND NOT THE *END*.

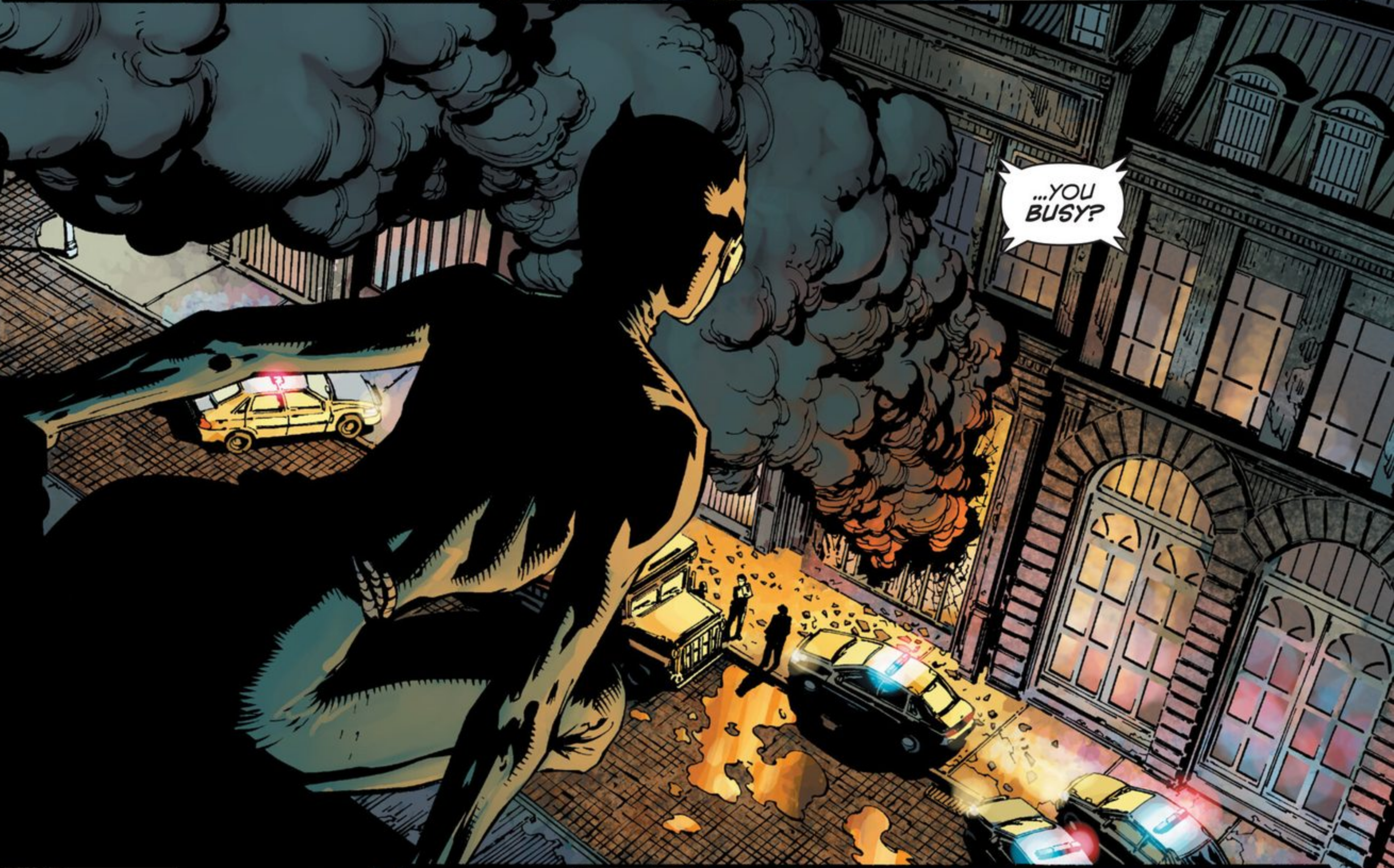
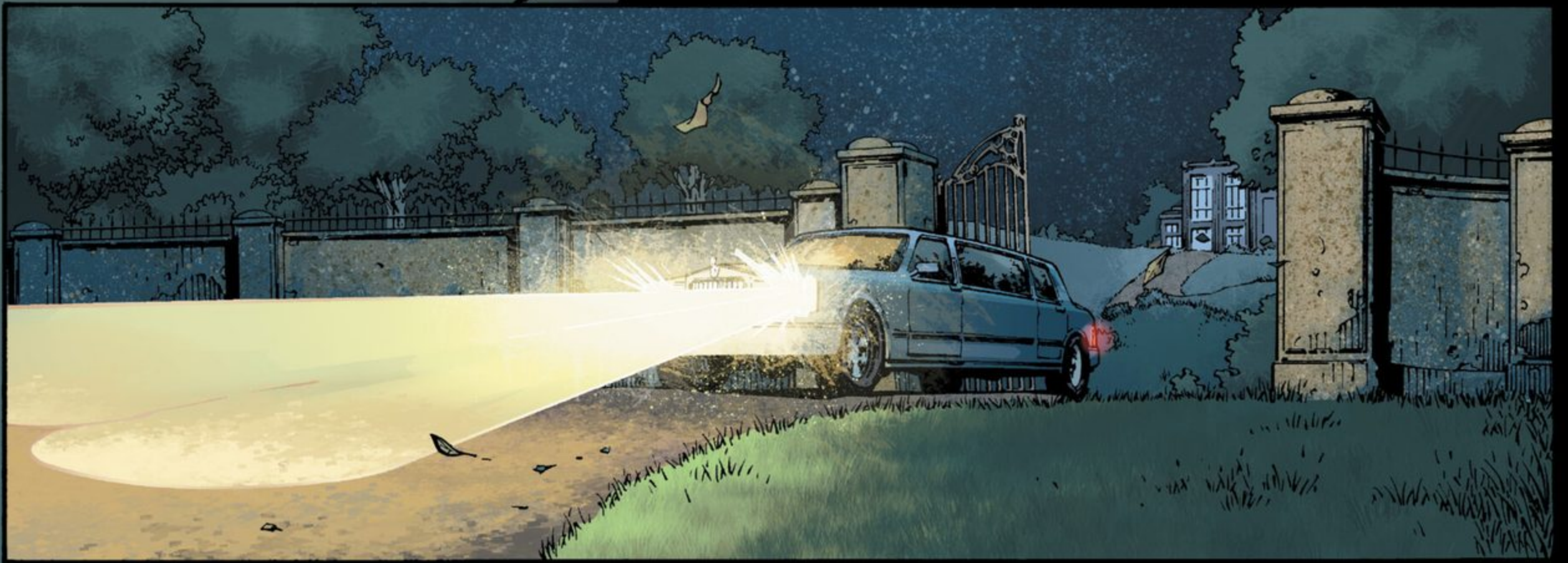


INDEED.

WE SOLDIER ON UNDAUNTED, YOU AND I, MASTER BRUCE.

AND IF I *MAY* SAY SO, SIR...

...I COULDN'T BEG, BORROW OR STEAL A *FINER* WAY TO LIVE MY LIFE.



EIGHT HOURS LATER: LEVIATHAN.

...OUR FACILITY IN YEMEN WAS COMPROMISED, SHEIKH IBN ALI FAROUK.

IT IS, IN FACT, IN THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY.

NOR IS THAT THE MOST DISGRACEFUL MISTAKE YOU'VE MADE.

YOU ALMOST BROUGHT HIM HERE.

THE DARK KNIGHT.

HERE.

FORGIVE ME... I...

YOU KNOW I CAN'T HAVE THAT.

HE'LL LEARN NOTHING FROM ME, I ASSURE YOU.

I CAN ORGANIZE AN ARMY OVERNIGHT, RECAPTURE THE FACILITY...

...PLEASE...

BUT HOW DO WE TRULY AND EFFECTIVELY PUNISH A PROUD FATHER LIKE YOU?

THE MASTER DETECTIVE WILL KNOW OF US WHEN I DECIDE, NOT BEFORE.

AND IN THAT MOMENT, HE WILL DIE AT MY FEET.

YOU, MY DEAR SHEIKH, WILL NOT BE THERE, I FEAR, TO THANK THE BATMAN FOR SAVING YOUR SON'S LIFE...

FATHER.

I WAS SAVED TO PURIFY THE WORLD IN LEVIATHAN'S NAME.

IN THE NAME OF ALL THAT IS *PURE* AND *TRUE*, STRONG AND *YOUNG*, YOU CAN ONLY DIE.



MY SON...
OMAR.

...PUT
THE GUN
DOWN...

MY
DEAREST
SON.

DIE.



HAIL
LEVIATHAN.

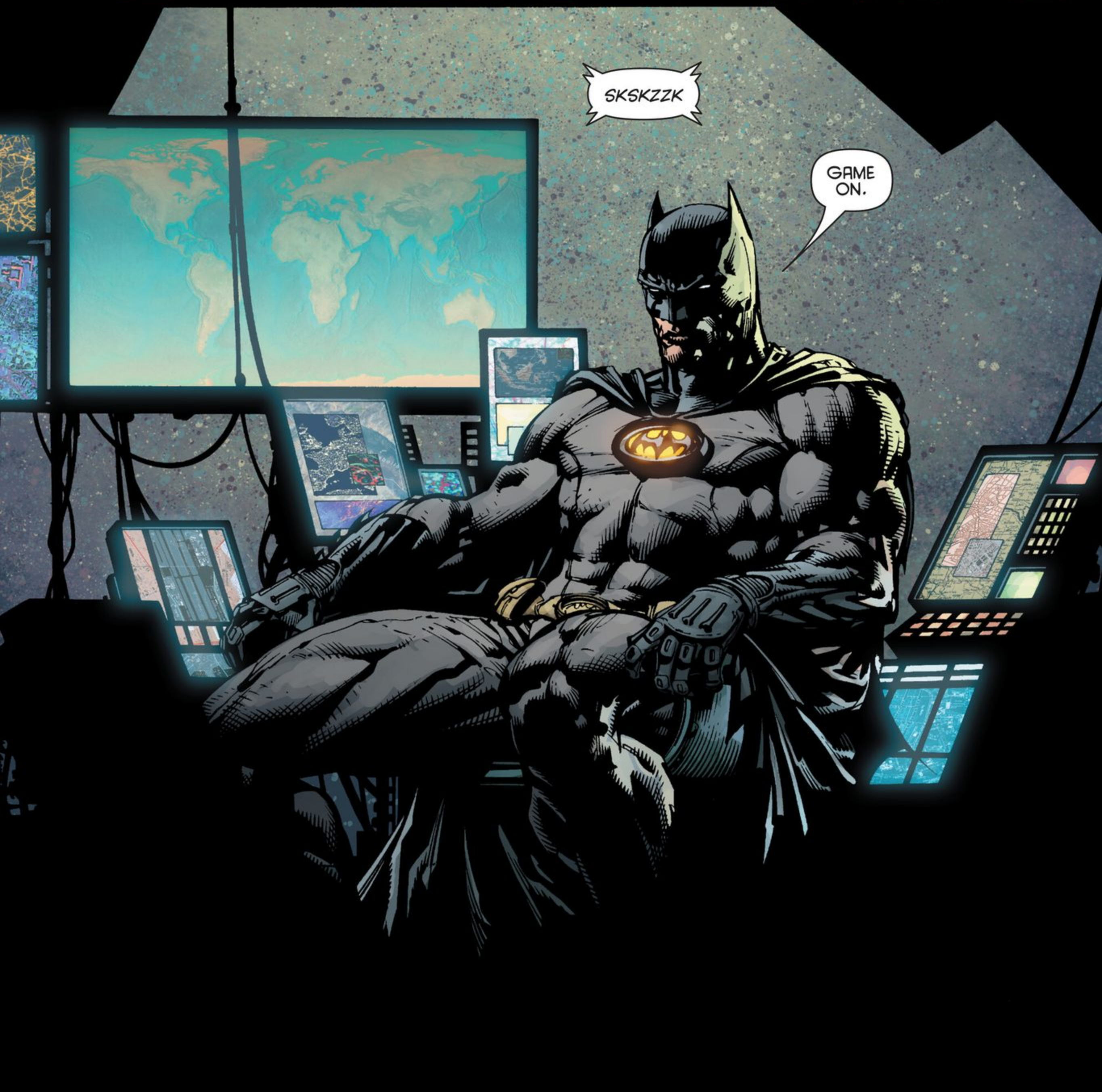


AND
SO WE WAIT,
PATIENTLY.

OUR TENDRILS
SPREADING,
UNCHECKED,
UNCONTROLLED,
UNSEEN.

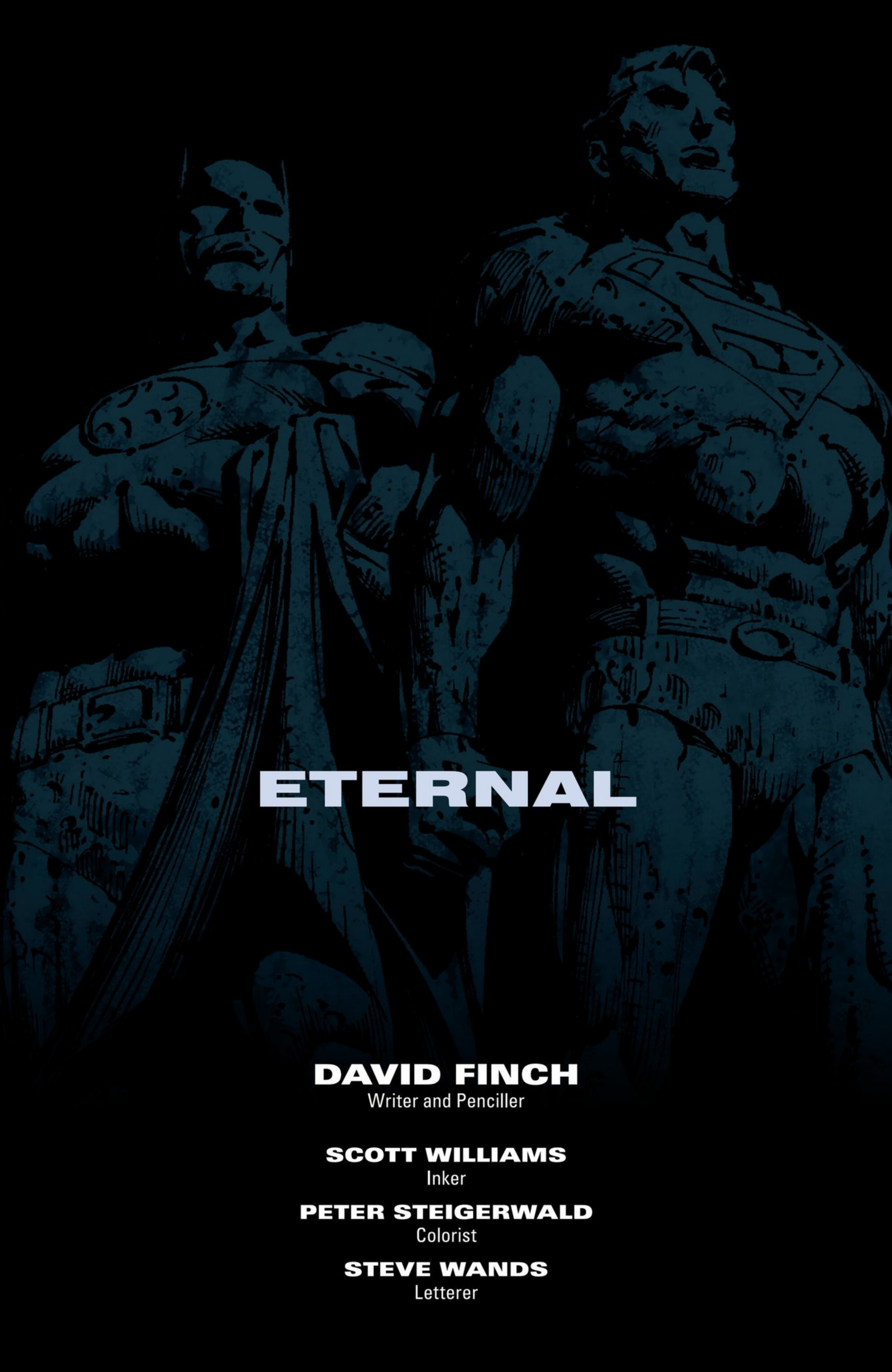
OUR HATRED
VASTER THAN
EMPIRES AND
MORE SLOW.
OUR NAME...

LEVIATHAN!



SKSKZZK

GAME
ON.



ETERNAL

DAVID FINCH

Writer and Penciller

SCOTT WILLIAMS

Inker

PETER STEIGERWALD

Colorist

STEVE WANDS

Letterer



PLEASE
CONNER, NOT
TONIGHT.



I'M NOT
HERE FOR A
FIGHT, DAMIAN.
JUST TO PAY MY
RESPECTS.
SAME AS
YOU.

YES. A
TRUCE. AT
LEAST ON
THIS DAY.



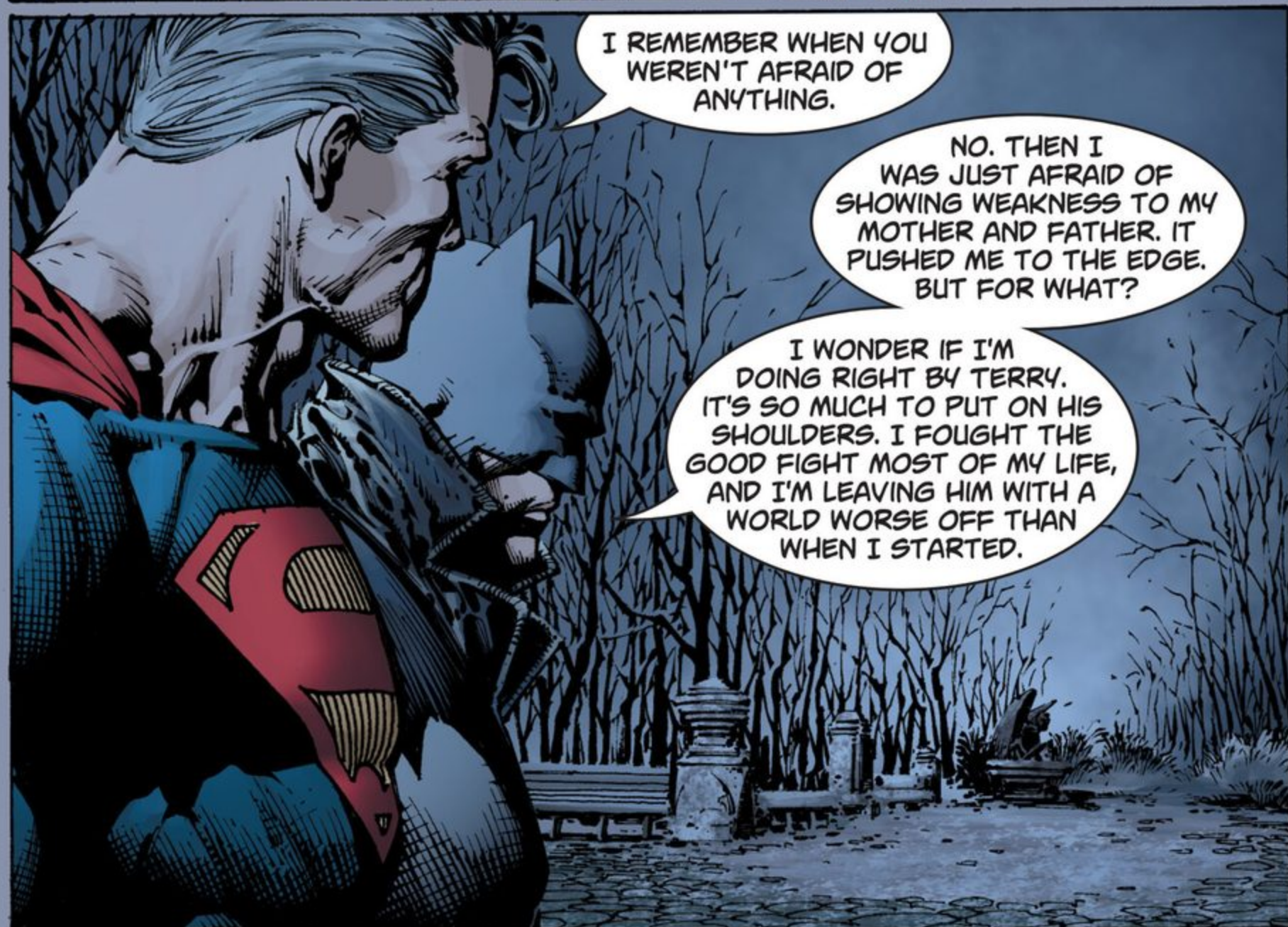
I WASN'T GOING TO
COME THIS YEAR. I
DON'T EVEN KNOW
IF I BELIEVE
ANYMORE.

DID YOU
EVER?
BELIEVE, I
MEAN.

TRUCE,
REMEMBER?
I'M NOT UP FOR
A FIGHT. EVEN
IF IT'S JUST
WORDS.

FINE.

TERRY IS
DOING WELL. BUT
HE'S UP AGAINST
SUCH CHAOS OUT
THERE. IT SCARES
ME...THINKING
ABOUT
THE FUTURE.



I REMEMBER WHEN YOU
WEREN'T AFRAID OF
ANYTHING.

NO. THEN I
WAS JUST AFRAID OF
SHOWING WEAKNESS TO MY
MOTHER AND FATHER. IT
PUSHED ME TO THE EDGE.
BUT FOR WHAT?

I WONDER IF I'M
DOING RIGHT BY TERRY.
IT'S SO MUCH TO PUT ON HIS
SHOULDERS. I FOUGHT THE
GOOD FIGHT MOST OF MY LIFE,
AND I'M LEAVING HIM WITH A
WORLD WORSE OFF THAN
WHEN I STARTED.



DON'T YOU
KNOW? DIDN'T
BRUCE TEACH
YOU ANYTHING
AT ALL?



WE DO
IT FOR
THEM.

YOU HAVEN'T
BEEN *LISTENING*! I'VE
ALWAYS DONE IT FOR HIM!
I NEVER WANTED TO LET
HIM DOWN. BUT NOW HE'S
GONE, AND I HAVE
NOTHING!

NO, DAMIAN.
YOU'RE LOOKING
IN THE WRONG
PLACE.

READ THE
INSCRIPTION.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF THE
WORLD'S
FINEST
HEROES
ERECTED BY THE CHILDREN
OF THOSE SAVED

IN LOVING MEMORY OF THE
WORLD'S
FINEST
HEROES
ERECTED BY THE CHILDREN
OF THOSE SAVED

WE DO IT FOR
THEM. THE FAMILIES THAT
EXIST BECAUSE WE WERE
THERE. THE LIVES THAT WE
TOUCH ARE OUR LEGACY.
THAT'S WHY WE NEVER
STOP FIGHTING.

THAT'S WHY
SUPERMAN AND
BATMAN CAN
NEVER DIE.

END



FINCH
2010



"Finch's quality of art lives up to the hype with his detailed panels and sharp lines — all designed to explode off of the page." — TAMPA BAY EXAMINER

"Finch's detailed, moody style works well on Gotham City and its Dark Knight." — NEWSARAMA

IT'S ALWAYS DARKEST BEFORE THE DAWN

Dawn Golden, a beautiful socialite with a link to Bruce Wayne's past, has gone missing. But while Batman struggles with Killer Croc and the Penguin, something far more devious is stalking the streets. What is Dawn Golden's connection to the demonic entities descending upon Gotham, and can Batman unravel their plans before it's too late?

The inevitable has finally happened: **David Finch** has come to Batman. But the fan-favorite artist isn't just drawing *The Dark Knight* — he's writing it as well — and along with artist **Jason Fabok** (*Soulfire*), Batman will never be the same again. **BATMAN – THE DARK KNIGHT: GOLDEN DAWN** collects issues #1-5 of the series.

SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN...
THIS MONSTER!"

